Dudley
CHRONICLE

Thursday, August 17, 2017 | Read by more than 62,000 people | Price when sold 70p

SCHOOL LEISURE CENTRE IS SAVED

Report by Richard Guttridge

A LEISURE centre at a school that was controversially shut last month has been rescued for the public.

Coseley Leisure Centre, part of The Coseley School site, was facing closure but will now stay open despite the school closing, at least until the site is redeveloped.

The centre opened in the 1970s but has seen thousands of pounds spent on improvements over the years and includes a sports hall for five-a-side football, three squash courts, a gym, cricket nets, a theatre and changing rooms.

It was feared the centre, in Henne Drive, would be forced to shut its doors but bosses at Dudley Council have now said they are determined to keep it open until the site is redeveloped as that was 'in the best interests of the community'.

The Coseley School

The move has been welcomed by the clubs and groups that the centre's facilities.

Councillor Peter Miller, Dudley's cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "It would have been a shame to lose the facility when a lot of money has been spent on it.

"It good news it has been able to be kept open for residents and youngsters and sports teams will be able to continue to use it."

A plan for a new £6 million school at the site has been lodged after The Coseley School was closed due to dwindling pupil numbers and poor performance.

Parents

The closure sparked a massive backlash from parents. The last pupils left in June as the school closed its gates for the last time.

The Collegiate Academy Trust, which includes Shireland Collegiate Academy, is keen to take over the site. Pproposals for the site to be used as a primary school emerged in April.

If approved, the school would be known as the Coseley Technology Primary. It would cater for 420 pupils when full, while offering an additional 52 pre-school places. The Coseley Technology Primary is one of three new free primary schools being developed by the trust.

HOSPITAL'S BALCONY GARDEN IS BLOOMING LOVELY

In the garden are (back) Jude Poyner-Morrisey, Ruth Thorpe, Rachel Wakeman and (front) Erika Keshela Susanne Trueman and Dennis Trueman

STAFF and volunteers showed off their colourful and therapeutic balcony garden, which is benefitting hospital patients, during an open day.

Staff welcomed people to the oasis, which was created thanks to donations and the hard work of a team of helpers, at Corbett Outpatient Centre in Stourbridge.

They transformed a bare balcony into the garden with the aim of encouraging patients' sensory development and also providing a relaxing outdoor environment to aid people with their rehabilitation.

It was originally opened last summer by Paula Clark, chief executive of The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, and features a greenhouse, rose arch and large plant troughs filled with plants and flowers.

Steve Saul, a former patient, came up with the idea with occupational therapist Erika Keshelya during one of his routine appointments because of his passion for gardening.

Ms Keshelya said the open day was a chance for the public to see the difference the garden is making to patients, their families and staff.

"The garden encourages sensory development and provides patients with a peaceful outdoor space. We received funding from The Dudley Group NHS Charity and donations from Wilko and Highdown Nursery," she added. Patients and staff also donated plants and crafts to the garden and raised money by organising cake sales and raffles.

COURT

Murder charge over corpse in car

A MAN who drove to a police station with a body in his car has appeared in court charged with murder.

Sukhwinder Singh, aged 40, was remanded in custody by Walsall magistrates on Saturday to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court this week.

Singh, of MacDonald Close, Tividale, who spoke through a translator, confirmed his name and address during the five-minute hearing. The dead man, named as Harish Kumar, was in the passenger seat of the BMW when Singh pulled up at West Bromwich police station on Thursday.

POLICE

Man's body found in garden shed

A MAN'S body has been found in a garden shed in Stourbridge.

The discovery was made in Heath Farm Road, Norton, at about 8am on Sunday.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the man's death was not believed to be suspicious but specialist officers from West Midlands Fire Service were brought in to deal with potentially dangerous chemicals at the scene.

TRAFFIC

Gas work set to cause road delays

WORK was starting this week on major roadworks which are likely to cause disruption on a main road near Russells Hall Hospital for the six weeks.

More than 700 metres of gas pipes are being replaced as part of the project run by Cadent on Stourbridge Road, which has been reduced to one lane on the approach to the busy Scotts Green Island.

INSIDE

BEN'S PUB ON WHEELS

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Dudley CHRONICLE

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Roofer's work was 'incredibly shoddy'

A ROGUE trader who ripped off his victims with 'incredibly shoddy' work has been ordered to pay out more than £9,300.

Unqualified roofer Geoffrey Whitehouse tricked two victims into thinking he was running a legitimate business before carrying out 'less than worthless' work to a 'ridiculously poor standard'. He admitted seven charges

Whitehouse, who failed to pay any tax and was claiming benefits, was giving a telling off by the District Judge Graham Wilkinson when he pulled a frown after hearing how much cash he would have to pay.

Sentencing at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court, the judge said: "There's no point pulling that face. It is only fair that you struggle to pay this back. You knew that you were not up to this work from the outset."

"A clear message must be sent to people who are engaging in these rogue businesses effectively to take money out of people's pockets and make sure they never get any money back for no work at all or valueless work. I'm sure the tax man is going to be in touch."

Whitehouse's year-long fraud saw him hand out business cards falsely claiming his unregistered firm Protectacoat Roofing Systems was based at Kidderminster's The Ash Lane Centre.

Victim Anthony Jones, who paid more than £3,400, was fooled into believing work carried out at his Brierley Hill home was covered by a 10-year guarantee. The roof replacement cost £6,000 to rectify as it failed to comply with standards.

Claire Ogeer-Ali paid £740 but Whitehouse failed to adequately fit replacement tiles at her home in Salop Street, Dudley.

Whitehouse, of College Green, Droitwich, received a 12-week custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, and made subject to a six-month curfew. He must pay a total of £3,490 compensation to his victims as well as over £5,000 in costs and surcharges.

New task force to aid rogue trader victims

A SPECIAL task force will aim to protect vulnerable people across Dudley borough before they are targeted by rogue traders.

Hundreds of potential victims have been identified with Dudley Council taking action to try to ensure they do not become targets.

Bosses have become so concerned about the problem they are setting up a 'scams unit' and are desperate to gain control of the issue after it was revealed at least one elderly person was targeted every day on average last year in the borough.

The council insists it is committed to ridding the streets of those heartless crooks who have been fleecing elderly residents.

Experts will aim to reach out to elderly and vulnerable residents to warn them what they should look out for. More than £250,000 will be invested over the next three years, with three new posts to be created to specifically focus on rogue traders and protecting potential victims.

Victims

The money will come from the authority's Improved Better Care Fund. Last month, it was revealed 369 complaints were made in Dudley about rogue traders in 2016, with many more victims who haven't come forward thought to be out there.

Councillor Peter Miller, trading standards boss at Dudley Council, said: "We are determined to do everything we possibly can to make Dudley a no-go area for those who want to go out and scam people.

"These people need stopping and when they are caught they need severe sentences.

"We are going to be employing someone who is very experienced in this sort of area.

"It is also about protecting small, decent traders who work hard to earn a living and do everything right and above board."

The increased focus on fraudsters comes unqualified roofer Geoffrey Whitehouse (see story above) was fined after carrying out work to a 'ridiculously poor standard'.

Family celebrates 60 years of chippie

Ivan's fish and chip shop marks 60 years in business, serving up fish suppers for Black Country folk

SUPPORTERS of a fish and chip shop came out in force to celebrate the business's 60th anniversary.

Ivan's has been at the heart of the community in Old Hill since it was founded in 1957. It has served a whopping three million bags of chips and two million fish in that time.

The shop was set up by Ivan Rudge and his wife Christine in August 1957. The business was Christine's idea – as her cousin had set up her own chip shop, Westwoods, in Blackheath. Mr Rudge used £1,000 of inheritance money to fund a shop in Cox's Lane.

Initially the couple worked full-time jobs during the day and then worked at the chippie in the evening but after six months gave up their days jobs because the shop proved so popular. When the Cox's Lane premises were demolished in 1972 the business moved to its present location in Reddal Hill Road.

Mr Rudge's son Warren, of Netherton, proved a chip off the old block, helping from the age of nine for £3 a week. He took over the shop when his father retired but 84-year-old Ivan still helps out. Warren, 49, said: "Sixty years of serving the community is a real landmark and we feel very proud."

A massive majority are opposed to depot plan

A NEW survey has revealed residents are overwhelmingly against plans to develop a green site next to a waste depot with an office block in Dudley.

Dudley Council wants to build a car park for 200 vehicles and a three-storey office block on the green space next to the Lister Road Waste Depot, which is opposite homes.

Results from a survey have revealed 90 per cent of responders are against the plans, with all having concerns about the impact of increased traffic in the area.

Many were concerned about the increase in noise, while almost three-quarters raised issues about the impact on their privacy.

Council bosses want to develop the depot, which houses its waste services staff, gritting trucks, and pothole teams, in a £1 million project.

The area includes several football pitches and residents have been left 'horrified' by the prospect of seeing it covered in concrete.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin and local councillors Shaukat Ali, Shaneila Mughal and Steve Waltho met with concerned locals in June as the campaign against the proposal was stepped up. Labour MP Mr Austin and residents say they will not let the development go through without a fight.

Bavarian night will help hospice

A NIGHT of oompah music and beer will see a popular labour club transformed into a German tavern to help raise funds for charity next month.

The Wilson Hall Labour club in Colley Gate plays host to the Bavarian Night every year, which encourages guests to don their lederhosen and join fellow members of the community for an evening of German music, tankards of beer and a not-so-German dinner of fish and chips.

All of the money raised by the event, on September 29, will be donated to supporting the work of the hospice, which needs £3 million for its modernisation.

Tickets cost £15 per person, from the hospice fundraising team on (01384) 377 778 or online at www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/bavarian-night

Quest for charity cash is completed

A WEEK-LONG series of comedy raised more than £2,700 for charity.

Events at The Knights Quest in Rowley Regis ran from August 1 to 6.

Money raised will go to Midlands Air Ambulance and Midlands Freewheelers Blood Bikers.

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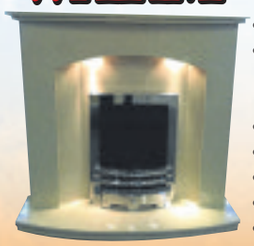

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Redundancy talks with 4,000 Wilko jobs at risk

THOUSANDS of jobs at retailer Wilko are at risk after the firm confirmed it has entered redundancy consultation with nearly 4,000 staff.

The discount chain said, following a review of its operating functions, changes are required to 'ensure it is best placed to continue to thrive within an ever-changing retail landscape'.

Wilko has almost 400 shops in the UK with a dozen branches across the local area, including Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen and Blackheath, as well as Wolverhampton, Great Bridge, Bloxwich, Walsall, Kidderminster, Brownhills, Rugeley and West Bromwich.

Wilko said it is consulting with 3,900 of its store supervisory team about a new management structure, alongside trade union the GMB.

It added that 1,000 senior supervisor roles will be created as part of the shake-up, as well as a 'significant amount' of customer service roles.

The move comes after Wilko posted an 80 per cent plunge in pre-tax profits to £5.1 million in the year to January 28, with the firm blaming 'uncertain economic and geopolitical events', the collapse in sterling and the introduction of the national living wage.

Inflation, which has soared since the Brexit vote, hit its highest level for nearly four years in May.

Neon run is set to stun again

AFTER breaking records in its debut year, a unique charity fun run is returning to Dudley next month.

The Neon Night Run saw more than 1,000 people take over Himley Hall in September 2016, dressed from head to toe in neon clothing for a huge neon party, followed by a 5k walk/run.

Organised by the Mary Stevens Hospice, the event raised roughly £25,000 for the Hagley Road charity, which is the most the charity have ever raised at a single event.

The event will take place from 6.30pm on September 22 at Himley Hall, and registrations cost £15 per adult and £8 for children aged between 5-12. See www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/neon-night-run-2017/ or call (01384) 377778.

Pub homes plan

A PUB could be knocked down to make way for homes.

Plans have been lodged with Dudley Council to put nine homes on the site of The Gate Inn, based on Colley Gate, Cradley.

Metal detector call after club stabbing

AN MP says weapons amnesties and metal detectors in nightclubs should be implemented to tackle the rise in violent crime.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood was speaking after the death of Ryan Passey, 24, who was knifed in Chicago's in Stourbridge.

Mr Wood said he was deeply concerned about the murder rate across the region and called for the authorities to do everything they could to get weapons off the streets.

The Conservative MP said: "The threat of being caught and punished has not been enough to stop them. We need to look at how we can make sure our town centres are as safe as possible.Whether nightclubs should introduce metal detectors is one possibility to consider. We also need to make sure we get as many weapons off the street as possible by bringing in gun and knife amnesties."

Stourbridge councillor Nicolas Barlow says rolling out detectors and scanners nationally should be looked at. He suggested the Government provide funding for necessary equipment.

Councillor Barlow said: "There does need to be something put in place, whether door staff have some sort of wand or there are mobile scanning devices. Some schools in this country have these type of devices and it may well be something we explore, with support of the Home Office."

Some nightclubs are fitted with metal detectors, mainly in busy city centres, but many are not. Councillor Barlow added: "I think there does need to be a review."

Chicago's has closed after licensing bosses and managers agreed its licence should be suspended. A full licence review is scheduled for August 24 to decide the venue's future.

Meanwhile, a senior police officer has urged parents to talk to their children about the dangers of carrying knives following a series of stabbings in the West Midlands.

West Midlands Chief Constable Dave Thompson said: "My message to parents is don't think this is all about gangs. What we are seeing is more and more young people involved in knife crime who have no previous background of criminal behaviour."

Hundreds attend vigil for popular footballer

FAMILY and friends of stabbing victim Ryan Passey attended an emotional vigil in his honour.

Hundreds packed into the square next to the Ryemarket shopping centre in Stourbridge to pay tribute to the 24-year-old outside Chicago's nightclub. where he died a week earlier.

A one-minute silence was held at noon on Sunday, and the victim's aunt Sue addressed the crowd afterwards. Balloons were then released by some of the popular footballer's friends.

Mr Passey's step-sister Chelsey Taylor-Hill, said: "Ryan was loved by everybody. I'm not at all surprised by how many people are here because he was always playing football with someone.

"Everyone loved him and he loved everybody so much. As a family we are taking every day at a time – it's very hard. I'd like to thank everyone for coming."

A wall outside the club has been turned into a shrine to Ryan, from Quarry Bank, with scores of floral tributes and photographs to him.

The ex-Stourbridge FC youth footballer's family presented a floral tribute before the club's clash with Matlock Town.

Meanwhile, a fundraiser set up in memory of Ryan topped its target in just 48 hours after being set up on Thursday. Friends aimed to raise £2,000 but the JustGiving page has already surpassed that total.

Impact

Jason Connon, who set up the page, wrote: "He loved and lived life for his family and his friends. No words can express the kind of person Ryan was to many of us, and the impact he had on those around him.

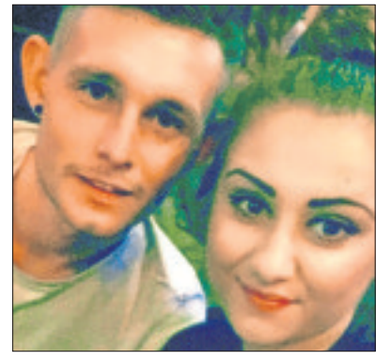
"All donations will be given to his family to donate to charities as they see fit in Ryan's memory. Ryan was a dear friend to many of us and will be truly missed."

A minute's silence was held on Saturday ahead of Team Dudley's fixture against Bromyard Town, while the club also put Ryan's picture on the front of its match day programme.

Kobe Murray, 19, of The Broadway, Dudley, has been charged with Ryan's murder. He will appear at Birmingham Crown Court on September 5.

Ryan's mother Gill Taylor, second from left, and family with the floral tribute at the Stourbridge match

Hundreds attended a vigil in honour of Ryan



Ryan Passey with his girlfriend Paige Marsh-Roberts

NEWS IN BRIEF

Homes proposed for a factory site

PART of a trading estate could be bulldozed to make way for housing.

Up to 50 homes have been earmarked for part of the Sovereign Works trading estate in Lower Gornal.

An initial application has been lodged for a residential development by J&J Properties. If approved, a factory unit on the Deepdale Lane site would be flattened to make way for the new homes.

A site investigation will be carried out before work can start amid concerns over possible mine shafts. But developers say they are confident risks can be 'adequately managed'.

Housing move at shop is rejected

CONTROVERSIAL plans to turn a former shop into a 12-bed house of multiple occupation have been refused by planners after police raised concerns.

Anti-social behaviour and criminal activity were also on the list of worries expressed by ward councillors for the site at the junction of Wolverhampton Street and Southalls Lane in Dudley.

West Midlands Police said they had 'fundamental' concerns regarding the 'impact of the proposal', which had been lodged by Thorne Architecture Ltd.

Exhaust pipe cut off car by thieves

THIEVES were cutting off a car's exhaust pipe before they ran off after being disturbed by the car owner in a village near Halesowen.

They targeted the Peugeot 205 in St Kenelms Road, Romsley, at about 10.30pm on August 6.

The car's exhaust was cut off but the offenders abandoned the vehicle after being spotted by the owner.

The culprits then made off towards Hagley.

Anyone with information about the incident should call the police on 101.

Church hall comedy will help the homeless

A COMEDY night is being held in Stourbridge to raise funds for a homelessness charity.

A Comedy Theatre Group, based in Stourbridge, is performing Some Sketches Wot We Wrote in St Thomas's Church Hall in Market Street on September 16 at 7.30pm.

The evening is to help Leslie's Care Packages for the Homeless.

Tickets are available by calling 07954 692593.

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Volunteers praised for flowers' return

VOLUNTEER workers in the Sandwell Valley have been praised for helping introduce wildflower meadows into the beauty spot. The volunteers have worked alongside Sandwell Council staff to introduce native meadow plants into areas in the nature reserve.

Chiefs said the meadows will 'ensure that the meadow plants can grow in the specially-selected areas around the Valley area'. Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "The volunteers have done great work on traditional hay meadow management in the Valley fields to create some very colourful areas."

Putting students on right course

THE University of Wolverhampton has launched a 'Start Here' advertising campaign to highlight its courses on offer, featuring billboard adverts across the Black Country and the wider West Midlands.

The new clearing website pages give detailed information about what courses are available and how students can apply when they receive their results.

Katharine Clough, director of external relations, said: "Reasons for going through clearing may vary, but the end goal will be the same – to get that all-important place on a course. Visit www.wlv.ac.uk website.

Pensions boost at JLR helps profits

A ONE-OFF pension boost has also helped boost profits at Jaguar Land Rover despite heavy costs from launching new vehicles and expanding its factories.

The West Midlands-based luxury car company, which makes its engines on the i54 site beside the M54 at Wolverhampton, also revealed lower wholesale volumes everywhere but at its Chinese joint venture business, as it supplied fewer cars to dealerships around the world.

First vegan event is to be held in town

A BLACK Country town will welcome its first ever vegan health and lifestyle event. The Crown Centre in Stourbridge will be packed with more than 40 stalls selling vegan food and lifestyle products on Saturday, from 10.30am to 4pm. A vegan diet excludes meat, seafood and dairy.

There will be talks and films from leading vegan organisations. Admission is £1 with proceeds going to the Hillfields Animal Sanctuary.

Tata seals pension deal for steelworkers

THE final move to secure the pensions of tens of thousands of steelworkers – many of them in the Black Country – has been announced.

Steel giant Tata gave details of a new scheme to replace the British Steel Pension Scheme.

Workers voted earlier this year to accept lower benefits in return for investment which will secure jobs. Tata Steel employs around 8,500 in the UK, more than 600 of them in the Black Country at sites in Wednesfield, Walsall and Brierley Hill.

The move will affect hundreds more who have worked in the steel industry over the years. There are 125,000 steel pensioners across the UK who worked at British Steel, its successor Corus and latest owner Tata.

It is expected to clear the way for Tata to merge its European steel business with German firm Thyssen Krupp.

Tata Steel UK said it had signed the documentation for a regulated apportionment arrangement (RAA) with the Trustee of the British Steel Pension Scheme, offering "more sustainable outcomes" for pensioners, employees and the business.

It sees Tata make a payment of £550 million to the British Steel Pension Scheme and the British Steel Pension Scheme Trustee will get a one third stake in the steel business.

Koushik Chatterjee, Tata Steel group executive director, said: "Considering the continued challenges in the global steel industry, the RAA presents the best possible structural outcome for the members of the British Steel Pension Scheme and for the Tata Steel UK business."

Ben raises bar with his camper van pub

By Clare Butler

BLACK Country Volkswagen enthusiast Ben Levy has lovingly transformed his VW 1957 Splitscreen into a pub complete with an optical bar, pub seating – and even a dart board.

Known as 'The Dub Inn' the vehicle's name is a play on the nickname for Volkswagens, known as 'Vdubs'.

The vintage van has now gone on to receive global attention – being shared millions of times on Facebook via The LAD Bible.

Mr Levy, who jointly owns West Midlands Motorcycle Centre in Brierley Hill, says that the vehicle has now become quite the star.

He explained: "I've owned it for about three years now and used to transport some of the bikes around in it. But then I thought 'let's do something different' so I decided I wanted to build a pub inside of it.

Attention

"It took me a couple of months to completely transform it. Since then attention on it has just blown up.

"It has won two prizes at camper van shows too. I was at the one show and someone decided to film it and stick it online and then the next minute it had gone viral. But I still use it as and when – it does cause a bit of a stir."

The vehicle can be hired out for weddings and special events as long as the licensee uses their own licence to trade from it. It has a cooler in place and 240-volt power supply so you can pull a pint.

There are also wine racks, disco lights and a bell to ring for service.

Mr Levy continued: "You can fit about four people inside with a couple of drinks."

Volkswagen enthusiast Ben Levy has transformed his camper van into 'The Dub Inn' mobile pub

The bar inside the 1957 VW Splitscreen

Ben Levy's pub on wheels even has a dart board

Hospitals are failing to meet A&E wait targets

HOSPITALS in the Black Country and Staffordshire are all failing A&E waiting time targets, according to new NHS figures.

University of North Midlands NHS Trust, which runs County Hospital in Stafford, saw just over four in five people seen within four hours, making it the 14th worst hospital trust in the country.

The NHS target is for 95 per cent of patients to be seen within the four hours.

At Walsall Manor Hospital, 82.3 per cent of patients were seen within the target time, 86 per cent at Sandwell and Birmingham NHS Trust, which runs Sandwell General Hospital and City Hospital in Birmingham and 89.1 per cent at Russells Hall Hospital.

At University of North Midlands NHS Trust, which runs County Hospital and Royal Stoke University Hospital, 80.9 per cent of patients were seen within the set time.

Priority

Only at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, which runs New Cross Hospital, were waiting times close to the national target with 93.8 per cent of patients dealt with within four hours at the hospital.

The figures released were for July. Nationally, 90.3 per cent of patients spent four hours or less in A&E.

A spokesman for NHS England said: "Reducing delays for patients awaiting discharge from hospital remains a key priority ahead of winter, and it is positive that NHS-related delays are lower this year than last."

Site bosses bag a top industry prize

FOUR West Midlands construction workers have been recognised in a top national competition to find the country's best building site managers.

Wayne Berry of Baggeridge Village in Sedgley, Richard Hilditch and Jamie Taylor-Bowen of Wedgwood Park in Barlaston and Paul Moore of St Mary's Gate in Stafford have won a prestigious Pride in the Job award from the National House Building Council (NHBC).

The awards recognise the best run sites in the country and are the highest industry accolade a site manager can achieve. The group were among nine David Wilson Homes Mercia staff to pick up awards.

Mr Berry, aged 45, from Wolverhampton, said: "It's a huge team effort and the hard work of everyone."

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Opinions are sought over less council tax support

RESIDENTS are being urged to have their say on proposals which would increase the amount the poorest families in a Black Country borough pay in council tax but boost support for those leaving care.

Dudley Council wants to alter its council tax reduction scheme to make those eligible for tax breaks pay an extra one per cent of the full amount.

Bosses say that the move would help pay to support care leavers and help them pay less council tax, or in some cases none at all.

It comes on the back of a two per cent rise for the poorest families in April.

Challenges

The council's finance boss Steve Clark said: "For young people who are leaving care, and on low incomes, there is already a huge range of challenges they face, so we want to support them as much as we can."

He added: "Reducing, or even removing in some cases, their council tax will give them a helping hand to cover other costs they may face as they make the move from care to independence."

People can take part in the consultation online at www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/your-council/council-tax-and-benefits website.

Police advice after 61 drone reports

WEST Midlands Police were called out to more than 60 drone-related incidents in three months.

Out of the 61 alerts to the force over April, May and June, only three resulted in a crime being reported. Most were reported to the police on the grounds of public safety. Others were over anti-social behaviour.

Some calls led to advice being given. The figures came from a Freedom of Information request to West Midlands Police.

The use of drones is governed by rules issued by the Civil Aviation Authority. No licence is required for personal use but drones must not be flown within 50 metres of a person or property, nor within 150 metres of crowds.

Learn to dance

A BEGINNERS' sequence dancing course is starting at Cherry Tree Learning Centre in Dudley on September 5. The classes will run between 8.30pm and 9.30pm and cost £3.25 per person. Call (01384) 243451.

'Drugged' model reveals Milan ordeal

Model Chloe Ayling was terrified

A BRITISH model has spoken of her ordeal after allegedly being kidnapped, sedated and handcuffed by masked men in Italy, who it is claimed planned to sell her online as a sex slave.

There is a Black Country connection to the horrifying incident. Lukasz Pawel Herba, of Tividale,was arrested on July 18 on suspicion of kidnap and extortion in relation to the case and a property in the Oldbury area linked to Mr Herba was searched. Computer equipment was seized.

Italian police said Chloe Ayling was snatched by a group calling itself Black Death last month and is believed to have been drugged and transported in a bag to an isolated village near Turin,. She was held for six days as her captors tried to auction her online.

The 20-year-old said she was injected with ketamine after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan before being bundled into the boot of a car.

Ms Ayling, of Coulsdon, south London, recalled her abduction calling it her "worst nightmare".

She said: "I didn't know what was in the syringe. I was panicking. I thought they were going to rob or rape me. I was terrified beyond words." Ms Ayling was eventually taken to the British Consulate in Milan after an apparent ransom bid failed.

Mr Herba was alleged to have posed as a photographer to meet Ms Ayling but claims he backed out when he discovered the group of Romanians he worked for had intended to kidnap her. He said he needed money to treat his leukaemia and was offered £500,000.

Concern at figures for maternity admissions

MATERNITY wards at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley were closed to new admissions for more than 700 hours over a period of two years, it has been revealed.

Figures show units at Russells Hall in Dudley have closed more than 50 times since 2014 amid claims maternity services are struggling to cope.

The Dudley NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall, is responsible for closing the maternity units on 29 occasions last year. The data from a Freedom of Information request also shows that units closed 14 times in 2015 and 9 times in 2014.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: "We occasionally have to restrict our maternity unit to routine admissions when demand outweighs capacity, in order to maintain safe care for our mothers and babies.

"So far this year, we have restricted routine admissions on just five occasions, for a total of 35.5 hours.

"During this time, emergency care and support is always available and we have escalation plans in place to ensure the safety of our mothers and their babies is the priority."

Labour

The research, published by the Labour Party, shows that nearly half of England's maternity wards closed to mothers at some point last year. It showed that 42 hospital trusts temporarily closed their maternity wards to new admissions at some point last year. Some closures lasted more than 24 hours while more than 10 trusts shut temporarily on more than 10 separate occasions.

It was revealed earlier this month that Russells Hall Hospital has also had to deal with an extra 30 patients a day arriving at its A&E department this year, further increasing pressure on the hospital.

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, said: "Families are being sorely let down by this Government's failure to recognise the crisis facing our NHS."

Glass cutting down at festival garden

Sarah Cordingly with some of the glass flowers that will form part of an outdoor display at the glass cone

ARTISTS have created a 'glass garden' ahead of the return of an 'unmissable' glass festival to the Black Country.

The International Festival of Glass will be held at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

To mark the event, artists and community members have teamed up to create a 'garden' using fused, brown, mosaic and lampworked flowers and plants, which will be available to view from August 25 to 28.

Visitors to the historic cone over the festival weekend can enjoy glass fusing workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations and opportunities to buy handcrafted items. Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "Everyone involved in the creation of this stunning garden should be proud of themselves."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Healthy lifestyle service launched

A NEW healthy lifestyle service has launched in Dudley.

Let's Get Healthy will provide community health checks and encourage people to visit a new website which has tips on how to stay healthy.

Councillor Peter Miller, Dudley Council's cabinet member for health, said: "The new Let's Get Healthy service aims to inspire, encourage and support the people of the borough to get healthy, signposting people to a range of free services which can help them to live healthier, more active, more connected lifestyles."

For more information about the service visit lets-get.com website.

Museum one of best attractions

A MUSEUM has been named among the top attractions in the Midlands.

Bewdley Museum has been included in the top five heritage sites in the West Midlands following a secret visit from national researchers Service Science, who assessed a number of areas including the gallery, information desk, shop and cafe.

Museum manager Ali Bakr said: "Everyone takes immense pride in the custody, management and development of this unique site. This commitment will continue to take the museum from strength to strength."

Gary is gagging for new tour date

STAND-UP comic Gary Delaney is heading for Stourbridge. The 44-year-old is bringing his There's Something About Gary show to Stourbridge Town Hall on September 16.

The Solihull-born comic, who is married to fellow comedian Sarah Millican, is the only comic ever to have got two gags in the same top 10 for Dave's TV Funniest Jokes. Delaney is a regular on television's Mock the Week. Tickets for the Stourbridge show cost £15, call the box office on (01384) 812812 or see www.boroughhalls.co.uk website.

MP backs campaign to stay safe near water

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has urged children and their parents to take care around water this summer.

He has backed a 'stay safe' campaign to raise awareness of the danger of swimming or playing near open water, including canals, quarries, lakes and reservoirs.

Mr Austin said: "I'm urging people to check out the 'stay safe' campaign to learn more about keeping out of harm's way."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Poetry in our lingo? That caw be roight!

I'M sure they meant well, but the decision to turn next month's National Poetry Day into a celebration of regional dialects bears all the hallmarks of the ivory-tower academics patronising the hoi-polloi by trying to use a bit of their lingo.

Poets from different parts of the UK have been asked to choose a word exclusive to their local dialect, and write a poem about it.

According to lexicographer Susie Dent, the aim is to "shine a light into a lexicon that's too often overlooked." Which I think, translated into English, means learning about words people in other areas may not be familiar with. Yet isn't exclusivity the whole point of these words?

Believe it or not, most people in the Black Country don't talk about wammels, gleeds, or being clemmed to jeth due to a shortage of bostin fettle in their everyday discourse any more than they doff their cap when the Earl of Dudley trots past in his horse drawn carriage. But we are immensely attached to it because it is part of our heritage, identity, who we are. The last thing we want to hear is some shiny-faced pundit from the Home Counties talking about bibbles and reasty donnies with a curled lip and a knowing smile.

You only have to look at the regions represented by the project to get a flavour of how it is going to pan out. Merseyside, Humberside, Cumbria. Who, outside of the quangocracy, identifies themselves as being from Merseyside? They are from Liverpool, St Helen's, or The Wirral. Cumbria? Didn't exist until 1974, and most of us think of it as being the Lake District. And many years working with a dyed-in-the-wool native of Hull left me in no doubt that references to "Humberside" would not be well-received.

These are areas with no historic or cultural identity, but rather parcels of land drawn up by outside politicians and bureaucrats for the convenience of outside politicians and bureaucrats.

And then we come to the West Midlands, where the problem was highlighted perfectly by the BBC vox pop on the word that had been chosen to represent the area, "bobowler".

Now I know what a bobowler is. You probably know what one is. But the presenters could barely contain their amusement at the obscurity of the work, and nobody the roving reporter spoke to had a clue what it meant . Which is not that surprising, really.

Because bobowler – a butterfly or large moth – is unique to the Black Country. And the BBC man was asking people in central Birmingham.

Bostin, ay it? Yo caw put a price on that.

Adventurers abound alongside amiable antipodeans

Grylls and spills – exploring a headline which was in a national newspaper

Adventurer Pen Hadow – poles apart from sanity? As he returns on his chilly quest

Australian High Commissioner Alexander Downer, not at all living up to his name

Snow way for Pen to reach pole goal

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

CONFUSING headline of the week. "I survived on insects like Bear Grylls, says man lost in outback for three days." (Daily Telegraph).

ANYONE else confused by Hugh's (Josh Whitehouse) plea to the lovely Demelza (Eleanor Tomlinson) in the finale of Poldark (BBC1)? Hugh is going blind and mumbling a bit. As far as I could hear, he told Mrs Poldark that he wanted a snog in order to go into the darkness "knowing I once tasted Devon." Heaven, apparently.

IN May 1998, for reasons I won't tire you with, I was standing on an ice floe 200 miles from the North Pole at 20 degrees below zero, watching a councillor from Wolverhampton trying to persuade an Arctic explorer to pack it in and come home (like I say, it's complicated). The explorer, Pen Hadow, was making absolutely no progress on his way to the pole. Every day he trekked a few miles north across the floes and pitched his tent. As he slept, the floes drifted a few miles south. But, despite the pain, cold and polar bears, he refused to be rescued. All we could do, after a perilous 14-hour flight to find him, was give him extra food and a small boat and wish him well. Hadow carried on trekking north for a few more days before being rescued by a navy vessel. Now, at 55, he's off again, leading a party trying to sail two yachts to the pole to demonstrate climate change. Back in '98 he struck me as utterly bonkers and a tad selfish. But above all, a tiny dot at the top of the world, limping on with an injured knee, he looked incredibly vulnerable. I would not have put money on him being alive, let alone still exploring, nearly 20 years later.

IF I learned anything from my Arctic adventure, it is not to eat luke-warm runny egg sandwiches as one's Twin Otter makes its final approach to land on a large piece of ice. This is needlessly adding nausea to terror. One of my few claims to fame is that I have thrown up at 86 degrees north.

ALEXANDER Downer. How did he slip through the net? The Australian High Commissioner popped up on the BBC's flagship radio programme Today this week and dared to utter the O-word about Brexit. Optimism. At a time when the only acceptable liberal-left narrative is that leaving the EU will destroy the country and sentence our grandchildren to eternal serfdom, Downer said some Brits were being a bit too glum. I will not poison your tender minds with more of his antipodean joy. As my mailbox over the past few days shows, some Brits are positively slavering for disaster. They cannot wait for armageddon. They are aching to embrace dereliction. How dare some cheerful Aussie walk on their dreams?

A BBC schools video on Roman Britain features a black soldier. The historian Mary Beard says Roman Britain was indeed ethnically diverse. For this, she has been pilloried on social media (why don't we call it antisocial media?). Consider what Rudyard Kipling, proud spokesman for the British Empire and the man who urged us to "Take up the white man's burden," had to say on the subject. You might imagine that Kipling, of all people, would believe in an ethnically pure, all-white ancient Britain. Not so. In his poem about the Thames, The River's Tale, he writes: "And Norseman and Negro and Gaul and Greek / Drank with the Britons in Barking Creek ." A black face in Londinium 1,800 years ago would have attracted no more attention than it does today.

THANKS for your horror stories of deliveries by couriers. I loved the tale from a reader who received a text message that a parcel would be delivered to his address at 11am. Which was odd because he wasn't expecting anything. Next came a text with an image, apparently showing the parcel delivered by his side door. It turned out the photo was of somebody else's side door. The parcel, which had nothing to do with him, had been safely delivered to an address in Liverpool. The reader lives in Walsall.

THANKS, too, for your tales about dodgy pub quizzes. They reminded me of the one occasion when I objected to a quiz result, on the grounds that the rules stipulated teams of four and the "winning" team had six. "Oh, it's just a bit of fun," laughed their captain, collecting a handsome prize. Depends on what you call fun.

YOU are about to leave a restaurant and ask for the bill. "How much would you like to pay?" says the waiter. "Just the bill, please," you insist. "Yes," says the waiter, "but how much?" Bonkers? Of course it is. Yet this is how Britain's "divorce bill" from the European Union is being decided. They want us to suggest a figure. We should tell Brussels to do the sums and give us a properly itemised invoice. Then we can move on to the "I never had fried rice" argument, followed by tearing up the bill and rushing for the door.

TALKING POINT

Cyclists: Go bike to basics on safety

DRIVING home down the dark country lanes I cornered – luckily quite slowly – to be confronted by not one, but two cyclists.

As they were riding two abreast and pretty much taking up most of that side of the road I had two options: I go round them, right across the other side of the road, putting myself and drivers on the other side at risk; or I wait until they put their brains into gear to choose the safer option to cycle single file.

Yes you guessed it, no thought on their behalf and I am forced to do the former, thankfully there was nothing coming the other way although I still had to drive behind them for around half a mile before it was safe to go past – blind corners.

How many times has this situation been the case? And I have to say on most occasions it has been cyclists wearing the tops with their cycling club name on the back. I feel tempted to ring the club up and tell them how irresponsible this is. It's not the thing that most 'Joe Bloggs' cyclists do. Surely if you are a member of a club you should know how to ride safely, even if you are racing against the clock. My husband and I recently returned from France where most of the cities and towns are well-blessed with cycle lanes and they are very well used. But even with the advantage of these special lanes the cyclists do not abuse the system by straying outside the lines and into the drivers' area.

When our children were small they all had bikes and we would go on rides as a family. They were always taught to keep single file, cycle in the middle of the line with adults taking the front and back positions, and never to ride alongside chatting to each other.

Another thing that was a no-no was cycling with headphones on. My husband drove behind a cyclist and tooted to show that the rider was straying to the middle of the road. He totally ignored him. When he finally passed, he realised why – headphones with music blasting in his ears. He had no idea there was even a car there, and yes, he was a club cyclist!

And just one more gripe, years ago, not a safety issue this time, more one of good taste. We once had a colleague who cycled into work – very admirable – the only problem was when he got here he did get changed but left his sweaty clothes and, even worse his trainers, steaming at the side of the office. Not pleasant. Fortunately he has now left and no doubt is stinking out somebody else's office. Not nice but at least this won't kill you!!

SUE ATTWATER

● See next week's Talking Point as we give the cyclist's verdict on drivers.

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Clearer view is needed in local government

YOU and your readers may have noticed the way the notion of a region is being used to identify the West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country and the UK Government's West Midlands Region. This situation reflects the way sub-national government is so fragmented as well as being dominated by Westminster.

We need a more disciplined and understandable approach which would help voters and others have a clearer view of who's doing what, for whom and why.

The WMCA is an administrative area was established in 1974 and abolished in 1985 as the West Midlands Metropolitan County. It was a political creation which took then largely Labour areas out of the Conservative shires.

A major justification for the WMCA sticking with the Met county area was that most of journeys to work in it originated and ended in the area. This ignored the trade in goods and services which go far beyond .

The Black Country is defined by its history and legacy from the mining and iron working communities and villages.

The UK Government Region takes in the WMCA, Black Country and other areas which are really sub regions. It ticks all the economic boxes, is identifiable in an English regions perspective, embraces a range of political traditions and would have real political clout within the UK and beyond. It might also facilitate a move away from Westminster and Whitehall dominance. It could also allow the establishment of a more local government and the demise of the existing mega local authorities.

GEORGE MORRAN
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Uphill battle to improve the roads

I write regarding Mr Peter Cole's recent post about HGVs causing unnecessary tailbacks whilst travelling uphill.

I am aware of the problem, but in my view the experts who design long uphill stretches of major routes do not make plans to limit this.

So much could be done, such as an extra lane. I appreciate the cost of upgrading, but the benefit of better infrastructure is always productive.

There is also the problem of speed limiters on HGVs.

Road planners need to assess a lot better than they do at present, as HGVs are a vital part of the economy, so should be accounted for in any road design.

HGV drivers in the main are responsible, but it's still one of the most over regulated, tracked, and ignored by traffic departments, industry, but to be constantly criticised is why there is a drastic shortage of drivers.

MR P WINCHURCH
Dudley

Brexit doesn't have to mean resentment

ISN'T it about time that our politicians started to use common sense with regards to the Brexit negotiations.

Surely both sides need to be realistic and realise we need each other for lots of reasons. The world is a very dangerous place, we need to be united in the fight against the vile terrorism destroying people's lives.

Friendship is a very precious thing, not to be thrown away easily. Let's hope when we finally get our independence back that we can resume our lives without bitterness and pettiness.

I feel sure that most people both sides of the channel only want a less stressful and worrying life; don't let resentment destroy us all.

J PRIEST
Dudley

Recharge on the move idea

SINCE the decision has now been made to eventually allow only electrically-powered vehicles on our roads, the inevitability of charging the batteries of all these vehicles becomes a major problem.

It would be a big advantage for the vehicle to be able to recharge itself.

Future vehicles could be fitted with a mechanism consisting of an electrical generator connected to a gear box and a remote operated clutch.

If we now consider a conventional vehicle rear axle with a differential in the middle but without the main drive shaft from the engine, the shaft from the prepared mechanism will take the place of the engine drive shaft, and become an active device able to provide charging power to the vehicle battery. The result is to use the vehicle wheel power to recharge the battery.

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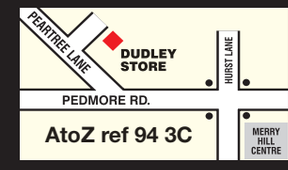

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Fighting fires? Most calls are to elderly falls

FIRE crews at two Black Country stations were sent to deal with more than 2,000 elderly falls in a year – twice the number of actual fire responses.

The crews at Wolverhampton and Fallings Park were the busiest across the West Midlands in 2016/17. Dudley, Walsall and Haden Cross were also busy.

But out of the 2,156 responses at Wolverhampton, just 439 were for actual fires, 1,116 were for falls. At Fallings Park, out of 2,155 responses crews attended 553 fires and 1,003 falls.

The change in role for the firefighters is down to a Wolverhampton Council contract won by West Midlands Fire Service called Telecare. It sees a call centre call on the trauma-trained firefighters to help with a fall where the independent-living person is not injured.

On winning the contract last year, Phil Loach, Chief Fire Officer for West Midlands Fire Service, said it was 'a fantastic opportunity to help the most vulnerable members of our community'. Wolverhampton

By Alex Ross

Watch Commander David Nail said: "Our role has changed, we have always been first-aid trained, but now we are going out more on responses to falls. We used the skills before at fires and road traffic collisions, now we are using it in elderly people's homes."

Mr Nail said it was not adding strain on the station, which had taken no more resources on as a result.

The figures, which came from a Freedom of Information Act request showed that Dudley was busy during the financial period, receiving 1,087 call-outs. Dudley was called to 84 falls, As well as checking on the person, they give advice on fire prevention.

Hero Duncan will be back at Old Trafford

Cameron Hay plays a young Duncan Edwards in The Boy Who Had it All, being premiered at Old Trafford on October 1

A FILM about the life of Duncan Edwards is set to be premiered at the ground where he dazzled thousands of adoring supporters.

The Black Country filmmaker behind the project revealed it has been agreed for the short film to be launched at Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United.

The Boy Who Had it All will focus on the football hero's childhood in Dudley before he went onto glory with Manchester United and England, until his career was tragically cut short by injuries sustained in the Munich air disaster in 1958.

Scenes were shot at the Black Country Living Museum earlier in the summer, while filming has also taken place at Dudley Museum and Dudley Cemetery.

Filmmaker Marcus Distant has managed to secure two suites at Old Trafford as part of the screening on what would have been Edwards' 81st birthday.

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Students get gold after 40-mile trek in the wild

Eldair with college principal Graham Pennington and DofE Manager David Hughes

Marta receives her award from Sandwell College Principal Graham Pennington

TWO intrepid Sandwell College students have struck gold by gaining the top Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Both Marta Szmyt and Eldair Ngoma braved torrential rain to trek 50 miles across Dartmoor during a four-day expedition in the wild.

They will now receive Gold Award Certificates from Prince Edward at a formal presentation at a Royal Palace in London. The Duke of Edinburgh himself, retired from official royal duties earlier this month.

Central Sixth student Marta volunteered as a group leader for 18 months with Walsall Pathfinders and Adventurers.

Club director Cherry Scarlett said: "Marta has gained a lot of confidence in her creative abilities, which makes her a fantastic teacher. Her dedication, attendance (she didn't miss one meeting), organisation and talent can be seen in the achievement of her students."

The 19-year-old former Blue Coat C of E Academy student also spent 12 months improving her physical fitness in the gym and learned to play the ukulele from scratch in six months.

Marta then completed a week of classical civilisation and ancient history summer school.

History

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Marta coped extremely well with the very challenging conditions of Dartmoor. Well done – a pleasure to assess."

Marta is now awaiting her A-level results in history, philosophy and biology after being offered university places at Nottingham and Birmingham to study a degree in Ancient History.

Public Services student Eldair spent 18 months volunteering in the West Bromwich Barnardo's shop to complete his award.

Shop manager Eve Baker said: "Eldair has always conducted himself in a professional manner, always willing to help both customers, and his peers. He has also on occasions mentored new staff to assist with their training."

The 18-year-old former Aldridge School student spent 12 months improving his physical fitness in the gym, weightlifting 40kg, and is ready to take his test after learning to drive. Eldair also completed a residential week with National Citizen Service.

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Eldair's group worked well together through the difficulties they encountered with navigation and weather conditions. Their camping skills and food selection were good."

Eldair is now set to pursue a career in policing after being offered university places at Coventry, De Montfort and Derby.

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Bomb and mine collapse survivor to mark 104th

HIS home was bombed during the Second World War and he survived a tunnel collapse as a miner.

Now great-grandfather Joseph Hopson is approaching his 104th birthday.

Mr Hopson, born in Gornal, will be marking the milestone on August 23.

He will celebrate the occasion with his family and fellow residents at Nelson House care home in Dudley, where he now lives.

His granddaughter Lynn Leyland, 52, who lives in Quarry Bank, described him as a strong person who has always been dedicated to his family.

Mr Hopson worked at Baggeridge, in Dudley, as a miner during the war. In that time he was involved in a 'freak accident' which meant he could no longer be a miner, said Lynn.

Retired

He then went on to work at the Round Oak Steelworks in Brierley Hill, which was formerly on the site of Merry Hill, before he retired at the age of 65.

After Mr Hopson and his wife Emma Elizabeth were married they moved to Pedmore Road, Brierley Hill.

During the war their home was targeted by the Germans which meant they had to move house, but Mr Hopson chose to stay in the town. Around five houses were struck by the bombing raid, but no one was injured.

The family then moved to a new home on Bradford Road, which is where Mr Hopson lived until he moved to a care home.

Lynn recalled to the mining accident which changed his life. "There was a pitfall which landed on his leg which made him disabled," she said.

Joseph holds his baby son Eric

Joseph with one of his trusty bikes

Betty Jones, left, turns 105 alongside Joseph turning 104, with manager Leah Unitt

"On the form that come from the doctor, it said he had poliomyelitis (an infectious disease caused by the poliovirus)."

Emma passed away in 1986.

Mr Hopson has one son Eric,aged 75 and lives in Woodside, Dudley, and three granddaughters, Susan Hopson, 45, Elizabeth Parsons, 35, and Lynn.

Lynn has two sons, John, 32, and Daniel, 22, and one daughter, Emma, 28. Emma is expecting a child, which is set to make Mr Hopson a great-great-grandfather.

Lynn said: "He has been made part of the family at Nelson Court. On his birthday, we will take a cake up and celebrate with him."

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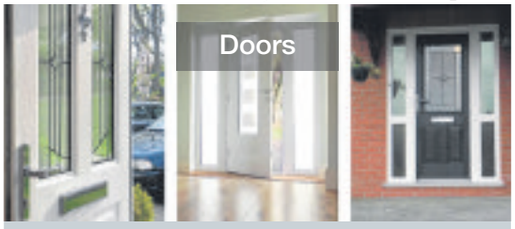

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The new diesel locomotive land train operating at Dudley Zoo

Train from Spain is on track for transporting zoo visitors

By Jamie Brassington

A DIESEL locomotive which once transported tourists in Spain has been given a new home at Dudley Zoo.

The red and white land train previously carried holidaymakers across the seafront in Alicante but has now been given a new lease of life at Dudley.

It has replaced a previous train which was employed at the site for almost three decades. The attraction has added a third carriage to the train. It will carry visitors from the entrance of the siteat Castle Hill, around the grounds.

Zoo manager Matt Lewis said: "Our previous train Dotto had transported families, buggies and wheelchair across the site for 29 years, but was showing its age.

"We are limited to the type of train we can have because of the steep and bendy gradient of the site and the sharp turn it has to do by the castle, so we are delighted to have sourced the same, newer model."

Zoo chiefs hope they can bring back the original steam engine run alongside the new one. This would ensure a steam train would run at the site at all times.

Mr Lewis added: "I know visitors were very fond of our land train so we are looking into using the old engine with the new carriages."

Pupils' visit to build up safety knowledge

PRIMARY school children donned hard hats and high-visibility jackets to learn about safety at a housing development.

The youngsters from Straits Primary School visited the David Wilson Homes' Baggeridge Village site.

Pupils toured the development on Gospel End Road, accompanied by Safety Steve, David Wilson Homes site safety mascot, contracts manager Lee Rowley and project manager Wayne Berry. The visit was designed to teach children the importance of staying safe around building sites.

Steve Barton, senior sales manager at David Wilson Homes Mercia, said: "Building sites may seem like a fun place to play but this is not the case."

Mrs Nicky Smith from Straits Primary School, said: "Many of the children were fascinated by the many trades and skills involved in building a house."

Father killed in crash on way home from pub

By Carl Jackson

A FATHER-OF-FOUR died in a car crash after he drove like a 'mad man' whilst more than two times the drink-drive limit without his seatbelt on, an inquest heard.

James O'Brien sped along Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, on the way home from the Horse and Jockey in Wall Heath around 6.30pm on May 15.

The 28-year-old landscape gardener overtook a vehicle on the 30mph limit single lane carriageway and then turned left into Ham Lane on the way home to Oak Lane. But the manoeuvre caused his blue Renault Scenic to under-steer, striking the kerb and tipping over on to the driver's side against a metal sign at the junction. Mr O'Brien, originally from Ireland and known as 'Jimmy', was declared dead at the scene.

Jimmy O'Brien

Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes, of West Midlands Police Collision Investigation Unit, read out statements at Black Country Coroner's Court from witnesses who had seem Jimmy between 6pm and the moment the crash happened at around 6.30pm.

One had described the Scenic overtaking another car at 'terrific speed' up to 60mph. His statement said: "The car appeared to be out of control and driven by a mad man."

Other witnesses said Jimmy was seen leaning out of his window and shouting aggressively at other motorists on Stallings Lane whilst several people told the police he had collided slightly with another vehicle.

Agitated

At 6.10pm some had seem him at the Horse and Jockey. DS Hughes said a witness described Mr O'Brien as "being drunk, been very animated and in an argumentative and agitated manner".

Reading the statement of another witness, DS Hughes said: "He (Jimmy) slung open his car door and knocked off the wing mirror of another car. I thought the man should not be driving in what was obviously a drunken state."

Jimmy's alcohol level was around 200 milligrams per decilitre according to a toxicology report – the legal limit is 80.

The medical cause of death was recorded as traumatic asphyxia. Coroner Zafar Siddique concluded Jimmy died as a result of a road traffic collision which was down to driver error.

He added: "It is a tragic set of circumstances and he leaves behind his wife and children."

Dog attack figures show a massive rise

THE number of dog attacks in the West Midlands has rocketed by nearly 90 per cent in the last five years.

Last year there were 553 incidents recorded by West Midlands Police involving a dog attacking a member of the public or another dog, up 260 (89 per cent) on the figure from 2011.

The figures were released by the force under the Freedom of Information Act and show that the number of incidents has risen in each of the last five years.

They include offences where a dog has allowed to be dangerously out of control in a public or private place and has caused injury.

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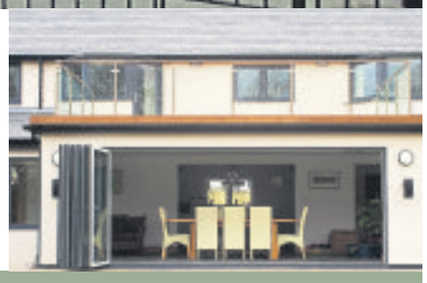

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Venue gets new name

BIRMINGHAM'S Barclaycard Arena is being re-named. From September the venue, also formerly the National Indoor Arena, will be called Arena Birmingham.

Managing Director for the NEC Group Arenas, Phil Mead, said: "Much of what we have achieved is down to the support of Barclaycard who have been an excellent partner since 2012, but we are now entering another exciting era. The construction of the LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Birmingham is already underway. We are a principle venue of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 bid."

Drink-drive injury crash figures not going down

THE NUMBER of people injured in car crashes caused by drunk drivers across the Black Country has not dropped in the last four years, latest figures show.

Since 2013 the annual number of casualties has remained at around 90 a year – with a rise in 2015 when those hurt in drink-driving accidents hit 121.

The figures, released through Freedom of Information, include drivers, passengers and pedestrians who were either killed or injured in drink-drive collisions. Some 60 per cent of casualties are people other than the driver.

By Marion Brennan

This follows statistics released earlier this month showing that the West Midlands saw the second highest number of arrests in the country for drink drivers involved in serious accidents.

West Midlands Police says it has have maintained a sharp focus on clamping down on drink driving in recent years, despite the number of traffic officers on the region's roads halving in the past decade.

Deaths

Wolverhampton saw the highest total with 104 casualties between 2013 – 2016 although the number fell dramatically from a high in 2015 of 32 to just 14 last year.

Last year also saw a similarly sharp fall in Walsall with deaths and injuries dropping from 30 in 2015 to 15 last year.

The reverse was true in Dudley where casualties caused by drink-drivers almost doubled from 18 in 2014 to 32 last year. In Sandwell, too, the number or those injured or killed shot up from 18 in 2014 to 30 last year.

Brake, the road safety charity, has joined others in calling for the drink-drive limit to be lowered.

Around three-quarters of 2,000 people questioned in a survey last year were in support of a lowering of the limit to 50mg alcohol in 100ml blood. The current limit is 80mg alcohol.

Gary Rae, Brake's director of campaigns, said: "Drink driving remains one of the biggest causes of devastating road crashes."

Last week it was revealed the West Midlands has the second highest number of arrests in the country for drink drivers in serious accidents with nearly 400 motorists falling foul of the breathalyser in one year.

The figures showed across the region in 2015 a total of 7,804 drivers in crashes were tested for alcohol, with 390 positiv, which was up 12.7 per cent on the previous year.

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Road closes for work on water main

MOTORISTS can expect delays as two roads will be closed for two weeks as part of water maintenance works on a route in Pensnett.

Birds Meadow and Bradley Street in Pensnett will close at the junctions with Pensnett High Street for a water main to be diverted, and work was due to start this week.

The roads were to be closed from this Monday for work to divert the water main as part of the £6.3 million road improvement scheme which is currently under way.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services at Dudley Council, said: "We ask motorists to bear with us while work to divert the water main is carried out. It is due to be completed within two weeks."

Book in for talk at library

A BIRMINGHAM-born author gives a talk on her work at Kingswinford Library next month.

The evening with Natalie Haynes, whose books include her second novel Children of Jocasta, is on September 7 at 6.30pm.

Tickets are £2 and should be booked in advance on 01384 812740.

Proceeds from the evening will go to the Friends of Kingswinford and Wordsley Libraries.

FOCUS ON KINGSWINFORD & WALL HEATH AREA

Opening of supermarket means 35 new jobs in store

ALDI has revealed that its new store in Kingswinford has created more than 35 job opportunities.

The store, on Dudley Road, has already recruited for the majority of its positions but still has vacancies for deputy store managers and apprentices.

Aldi, crowned Employer of the Year 2017 at the Grocer Gold awards, offers the highest rates of pay in the supermarket sector, with all Aldi employees now receiving a minimum rate of £8.53 per hour regardless of their age.

by Simon Stone

The discount supermarket has also appointed Dudley-born James Green to the position of store manager. He joined Aldi as an assistant store manager in 2011 and was promoted to manager just four years later, having received training stores across the West Midlands.

James said: "We've got a great team lined up for the Kingswinford store, which will ensure we offer shoppers the best possible service.

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to manage the store, which is so close to my home town, and the team and I are really looking forward to meeting customers."

Applications and more information on all of Aldi's store positions can be found on Aldi's recruitment website www.aldirecruitment.co.uk and the store is seeking people with management experience for its deputy store manager positions.

Deputy store manager roles start from 25 hours per week, with a starting salary of £9.53 per hour rising to £11.15 per hour, plus £4 extra per hour when managing the store.

Aldi apprentices are trained in all aspects of retail management during their three-year course, which features a mixture of in-store and theory work.

Aldi bosses will announce plans for the Kingswinford store launch celebrations in the coming weeks.

The sculpture which was made in Florence by Caroni in 1867

Cupid set for sale at auction

IT could be love at first sight for art collectors – with a 19th century sculpture of Cupid taming a lion one of several lots from a historic manor to be put up for sale.

The items have been taken from Wordsley Manor and are to be sold after the building itself was put on the market. The sculpture could sell for as much as £30,000.

It was made in Florence by Emmanuelle Caroni in 1867 and was one of three marbles entered in the Paris Exposition that year. It has been at Wordsley Manor for more than a century.

Grade II-listed Wordsley Manor has been owned by the Firmstone family for more than 90 years but is now up for sale priced £350,000. The statue is to be sold by Fieldings auctioneers in Stourbridge on September 2.

Business milestone on estate

A MULTI-MILLION pound development aimed at boosting business in the Black Country has reached a major milestone as the first new industrial unit was completed.

The 20,000 sq ft unit at Prime Point, on the Pensnett Estate in Kingswinford, is ready for a company to move in – three months ahead of schedule.

It is the first of four new units to spring up at London and Cambridge Property's (LCP) flagship estate which is set to new jobs to the region.

The adjoining building, a 30,000 sq ft unit, has also been built and left as a shell, for incoming tenants to work with LCP to arrange their exact requirements.

The industrial estate is already home to 160 companies.

Homes at former pub

A FORMER pub will be knocked down and replaced with homes after plans were approved.

The Summerhouse on The Portway, Kingswinford, will be bulldozed. A total of 14 homes will be built in its place after the proposals were tweaked having previously been refused by Dudley Council, which was unhappy with the initial design.

The application was be developer Coyne Group.

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Speedway proposal 'on the wrong track'

PLANS to build a new home for a speedway club have been labelled 'bemusing' by council chiefs.

They say they had not even discussed the scheme before it was submitted to the authority.

The Heathens Speedway Supporters Trust has drawn up proposals for a new track for Cradley Heathens in Oldbury.

Trust members have spoken of their optimism about the plans for the track at the Lion Farm Estate. However, council bosses have since poured cold water on their hope – and said the application is currently invalid so will need to be resubmitted.

Consider

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "I must stress there have been no discussions to sell this land to the Cradley Heathens and no discussions about using it as a speedway track.

"In fact we were bemused to receive a planning application on council-owned land but the law does allow developers to do this. The application is invalid because the applicants have not paid the full fee and it lacks any supporting information."

He added: "However, if the proposal is resubmitted, as with any application, the council is duty-bound to consider it."

After reforming in 2010, initially as Dudley Heathens, the club has regularly held talks with Dudley Council over a new home without success. Cradley Heathens have been track-sharing with Wolverhampton and Birmingham since reforming in 2010.

Attempts to find a site close to their Cradley roots in the Dudley borough have failed to come to fruition, which trust member Mark Robinson admitted was frustrating.

The proposals for the Queens Field site include a number of other sporting facilities including cricket and rugby pitches, a BMX track and basketball courts.

Welcome to the zoo, chick

The cute Violet Turaco chick's arrival marks a first for Dudley Zoo

IT'S been a chirpy success at Dudley Zoo as this unique feathered friend was the first of its kind to be born in the attraction's 80 years.

This cute little chick hatched on July 1 and is a Violet Turaco.

A brightly coloured bird, Violet Turacos have a glossy violet plumage with a thick orange bill, yellow forehead and crimson crown. Birds Section Leader, Nicola Wright, said: "We're really excited about the latest arrival, which is doing really well.

"We struggled to spot it in the first few days as she hid it very well in the nest, but it's now fledged so is gaining more independence."

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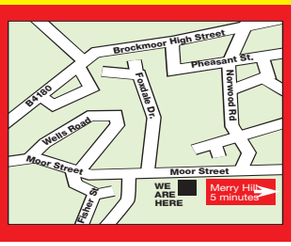

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Have a say on Black Country's future

Commercial feature

People from across the Black Country are being encouraged to have their say on a review of the Black Country Core Strategy.

Views are needed on how Black Country authorities can best meet housing, economic development and transport needs, as well as protecting the local environment to help shape the future of the area.

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils are all working together to achieve the very best future for local communities through the strategy which is a key planning and regeneration tool for the whole of the Black Country.

Investment

It plans for the area's future local development needs and directs services to the right locations to meet local needs. It also makes sure the necessary level of investment is attracted to create jobs and wealth in our region.

The current strategy was adopted by the four councils in 2011.

It has shaped the housing, industrial and retail growth of the area, whilst protecting the environment and greenbelt. It has also been successful in supporting regeneration for the past six years.

The strategy now needs to be reviewed to meet the new challenges and opportunities for the coming years, up to 2036.

A public consultation will make sure that everyone across the Black Country has the opportunity to have their say on the plans for the area.

The new core strategy will provide the framework for growth and development across the Black Country up to 2036.

It is really important that people who live and work in the area help shape it, so it reflects the aspirations of local people.

There are ten key issues that people's views are being sought on: meeting housing needs, supporting the economy, supporting town centres, protecting the environment, reviewing the green belt, keeping the Black Country connected, providing community facilities to support growth, people's health and wellbeing, working with our neighbours and regeneration across the Black Country.

Around 78,000 new homes need to be built in the Black Country over the next 20 years. There are enough brownfield sites to deliver around 56,000 homes, but new plots of land need to be found for an extra 22,000 homes as the population and economy of the area continues to grow.

There is also a need to find new employment land to expand the economy and create jobs. We need to decide where this development should go.

Making the most of brownfield land remains the top priority, however, in the coming decades sites like this are going to run out and the green belt will need to be reviewed to find more development sites to meet future needs.

Decisions also need to be made about the infrastructure required to support new development, including transport, schools and shops.

The consultation is open until September 8 2017. It's easy to take part by visiting blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk where all the documents are available to read and people can fill in a questionnaire online.

A leaflet, which includes a prepaid questionnaire, is also available at local libraries. Please email blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk or call 01384 814136 for more details.

Consultation events will be running across the Black Country throughout the consultation period, dates and venues for these are detailed below.

As part of the consultation, there is also a "Call for Sites" where people can put forward areas of land they feel may be suitable for development.

When the consultation closes all feedback will be collated, considered and used to help develop the next stage of the strategy – which will identify key locations for future development.

The views of local people will help plan for the very best future for the Black Country.

Views are being sought on how best to protect the environment as the strategy is reviewed

The strategy will also look at retail growth, employment and the economy

The Black Country needs your voice

Have your say!

Give us your views on housing, employment, transport and the local environment to help the area move forward.

The Black Country Core Strategy is a regeneration plan which sets out the future development of the area.

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Black Country - See it in colour

£12k payout for flea bite police officer

A POLICE officer bitten by a flea while on the beat has received a £12,000 payout. West Midlands Police handed the officer compensation for getting injured in the line of duty.

New figures reveal staff received more than £61,000 in compensation over the past year from the force.

Former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron dubbed the payout 'ludicrous'. He said: "It's ludicrous that taxpayers are footing the bill for when someone gets fleas on them."

A freedom of information request revealed a total of 14 police officers and other staff members claimed £61,131.30 between April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017. The officer bitten by fleas was handed out £12,127 in damages, while the force had to pay £4,185 in legal fees.

Four other officers and a staff member were also handed cash payments in excess of £5,000 over the past year. An officer who tripped at work got £5,000, another received £6,000.

Defective equipment used while on the job resulted in a police office getting £7,274 compensation, the figures revealed. Another officer injured due to 'manual handling' was given a £6,000 payout, while a staff member received £8,573.30 for injuring themselves in the same way.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Hannah Fitzgerald said: "Compensation payouts are only made following the assessment of appropriate medical evidence by insurers and solicitors."

Brewing up to battle for regional honours

THE Society of Independent Brewers' Midlands region awards will be judged in Nottingham on November 2.

Beers from Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire brewers will be in competition.

Smuggler's girlfriend carried £240,000 of drugs in suitcase

A DRUG smuggler's girlfriend has been jailed for more than four years after he gave her a suitcase with cocaine worth more than £240,000 to bring in to the UK by ferry.

Kimberley Brown, 27, was arrested at Dover after journeying from Calais with the false-bottomed case in tow. Once cut and sold, the 2kg of cocaine would have had a potential street value of up to £240,000.

The National Crime Agency revealed how Brown, of Walters Row, Dudley, had travelled to France on November 17, 2015, via a Eurolines coach from London Victoria.

Boyfriend Garvey Barnes, 36, a convicted armed robber, had travelled to France by car and stayed overnight at a hotel in Calais. He drove back to the UK the following day, while Brown got on the ferry as a foot passenger. As she alighted, she was intercepted by the Border Force.

Messages

A National Crime Agency investigation uncovered phone evidence revealing the pair had met in Dudley the day before the drugs run and had sent messages arranging to meet in Calais.

Last week Barnes and Brown were found guilty of being concerned in the importation of Class A drugs by a jury at Canterbury Crown Court.

Barnes, of Nottingham, was jailed for 10 and a half years and Brown for four and a half.

Richard Bowen, from the NCA's Dover border investigations team, said: "No doubt Garvey Barnes stood to make significant financial gain from this drugs run, but it seems he was happy to let his partner take all the risks. Despite this we were able to put evidence before a jury proving he had a leading role in the importation of this cocaine, and this is reflected in his lengthy jail term."

Global award for physiotherapist

A PHYSIOTHERAPIST has received global acclaim for her work in caring for young people who have had major transplant operations.

Jemma Mears' dedication has been recognised with an International Rehabilitation and Transplant Association's (IRTA) Allied Health Professional Outstanding Achievement Award.

The 41-year-old, from Sedgley, who previously studied at High Arcal School, has been part of the expert team at Birmingham Children's Hospital for almost two decades and has a special interest in the rehabilitation of patients who have undergone liver and intestinal transplantation.

Throughout her career Jemma has led the way in developing methods of improving physical and functional outcomes for young people post-transplant. She travelled to New York to pick up the award from the IRTA's President, US Professor of Surgery and Paediatrics, Dr Debra Sudan.

Ms Mears, principal physiotherapist for hepatology and transplantation at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, said: "I'm extremely proud and humbled to receive this award."

Jemma's nomination was submitted by Beverly Kosmach-Park, clinical nurse specialist at the department of transplant surgery at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She said: "I believe that she is truly deserving of this distinguished award."

Physiotherapist Jemma Mears with her award

Delays on M5 prompts call for a rethink

HIGHWAYS chiefs have been urged to reconsider lane closures which have caused traffic chaos on the M5.

Closures have been brought in where major roadworks are taking place at the Oldbury viaduct – between junctions one and two, which has caused major delays for motorists.

Work to improve the crumbling viaduct will last until the end of next year, potentially meaning many more months of misery on the M5.

Worcester MP Robin Walker has written to Highways England chief executive Robin O'Sullivan calling for the lane closures to be reviewed. They were introduced to limit the number of vehicles approaching the roadworks zone.

Tory MP Mr Walker argues using speed restriction to control traffic flow would cause fewer problems. He said: "Many are at the end of their tether with the delays on the M5."

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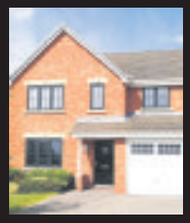

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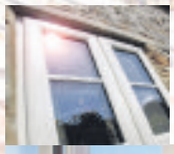

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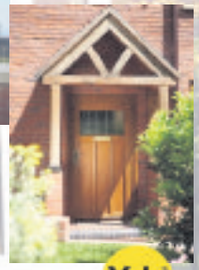

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Ball to mark hospice silver anniversary

A GLAMOROUS ball is being thrown to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge by Princess Diana.

The hospice is marking the anniversary as it prepares to undergo the largest refurbishment project in the charity's history. The hospice is attempting to raise an additional £3 million on top of the £2.8m they need each year in order to make their care available s.

The theme is 'Black and White' and the ball is at the Ramada Park Hall Hotel, Wolverhampton, on November 3. Call (01384) 377 778 or visit www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/black-and-white-ball online.

Cricket match row erupts into violence

A CRICKET match descended into violence after a row erupted between a player and spectator, it has emerged.

Fordhouses and Old Hill, from the second division of the Birmingham Premier League, have both been sanctioned following the incident at the Jack Threlfall Memorial Ground in Wolverhampton on June 17.

It saw a row break out between Old Hill's Nigel Davenport and spectator Pervaiz Akhtar, the father of a Fordhouses player Shoaib Akhtar. But that argument escalated with a number of Fordhouses players walking onto the pitch during their second innings before Mr Davenport reportedly struck both Akhtar senior and junior.

That led to the Birmingham Premier League disciplinary committee banning Mr Davenport for 10 games and initially imposing a 48 point deduction on Fordhouses for failing to manage the situation correctly. Old Hill were deducted 24 points for the incident, while Fordhouses saw their deduction reduced to 36 points on appeal.

The appeal was overseen by sports barrister Nigel Stelling. In a statement published on the Birmingham Premier League website, he said: "In respect of the first incident we received clear evidence from the umpire Mr Bhatti that Davenport struck Akhtar Senior. The incident escalated, Davenport was seen by both umpires to punch Akhtar junior with a clenched fist. Whist this was denied by Davenport he did admit contact with Akhtar Junior and using the language described by other witnesses."

Frustrating

Mr Stelling confirmed the punishment dished out to Fordhouses was due to how they managed the situation. His statement continued: "It wasentirely foreseeable that there was likely to be further problems given that Akhtar senior had remained on the ground. Nothing was said or done to prevent him approaching and confronting members of the Old Hill Club."

Fordhouses president, former Wolves director Kevin Threlfall, said he was 'desperately disappointed' by the verdict and insisted that the club had been made 'scapegoats'.

"We spent £2,000 on an appeal with the reasoning that although the points deduction was frustrating because we were top of the league, the most important thing was to clear the name of Fordhouses Cricket Club," he said. "We believe the points deduction is grossly unfair and disproportionate to the events as there was no physical violence whatsoever from us."

Historic pub is saved

The Fiddlers Arms in Lower Gornal will not now be demolished

A PUB which dates back to the 19th century looks to have been saved from the bulldozers after a bid to build a supermarket was rejected.

More than 700 people signed a petition opposing plans to knock down The Fiddlers Arms in Lower Gornal and put a Co-op store in its place.

And the development has now been refused by planning experts who raised a raft of reasons why the build was not suitable.

The chief concern was the fact the pub is classed as a heritage asset and they were not prepared to let it disappear.

The Fiddlers Arms was among more than 200 pubs sold by Marston's to New River Retail in 2013. New River lodged plans to knock down the pub in order to build a supermarket.

A major campaign was launched in a bid to save the pub. Campaigners now face a wait to see if the firm appeals the decision.

Dudley MEP and Sedgley councillor Bill Etheridge, who backed the campaign, said: "Far too many of our pubs have already been lost, have been knocked down to make way for supermarkets and various other purposes."

Landlord Roy Pickering is due to move on later this year, but welcomed the decision.

He said: "For the people of Gornal, I'm happy for them, for all the work they have done."

Petford moulding divison in move to new £1.5m site

TOOL making group Petford this week completed the move of its moulding division to its new £1.5 million site in Lye

Injection moulding machines from its former site in Brierley Hill were transferred last week to the site in Mears Coppice.

Group managing director Mel Sinar project managed the work to convert the former Controlled Heat Treatments works and create a 38,000 sq ft base. Petford, which has its headquarters at Lygon Buildings, Peartree Lane, Dudley, has already taken on 13 new recruits with the move from Station Drive, Brierley Hill, to Lye and that will rise to 19 by 2020.

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NEW FACE LIFT FOR WEST MIDLANDS FRESH MEAT WHOLESALER

West Midlands fresh meat wholesaler, Town & Country Meats is undergoing a brand-new face lift in time for the Bank Holiday! The Wolverhampton based company is having a companywide makeover, starting with their newest Factory Outlet in Merry Hill. The branch opened its doors at Easter this year and trade has been very successful. We spoke to Director Gary Walker about the rebrand.

"We are very pleased with the success of our latest store in Brierley Hill and providing a larger range of our products to the public in the Dudley area has proved to be quite popular. We are undergoing a whole rebrand of the company to bring it up to date and in line with the quality we offer. As we hadn't officially launched the store yet, it made sense do it at the same time as the rebrand and celebrate with our customers." The new look will be rolled out to all four stores by the end of the year with the Dudley store in Churchill Shopping Centre, being rebranded as a Butcher's Outlet, offering an edited selection of the best deals.

Established as a butcher's wholesale in Landport Road, Mr Walker expanded and opened his doors to the public with the first store in Wolverhampton in 2012, bringing a new breed of butchers to the high street. "Usually wholesale suppliers provide the big supermarkets with their stock and this is where the large chains can inflate their prices. Unfortunately, there is also a lot of waste in the supermarket chain as customers demand certain cuts or uniformed sizes of meat. Town & Country cut out the middle man and sell directly to the public at these wholesale prices, up to 50 % cheaper than most supermarkets. Quality is our top priority and we can also provide a wider variation of fresh meat to our customers, with no waste."

Two satisfied customers Andy Whyment and Steven Arnold

Now with four stores under its name, Town & Country moved production over to Hurst Business Park. "Having the production on site means that we can control exactly what we supply to our customers to make sure it is the best quality and at the best prices. We can then pass this saving directly on to our customers." Mr Walker added.

If you are not already familiar with the discounts Town & Country Meats offer, you can pick up 4 fresh Beef roasting joints for just £20 or 5kg of fresh Chicken Fillets for just £20 and they're not filled with water like some value ranges in the supermarket. In comparison, you can expect to pay around **£10 per kg for a beef joint or around £30-£35** for the equivalent amount of chicken in Tesco. Definitely worth a visit to save some pennies without compromising on quality. Town & Country boast that they can almost half your average shopping bill. Conveniently, they don't just sell fresh meat but also a selection of frozen meat, veg and delicious puddings, all at wholesale prices.

This Bank Holiday, 26th, 27th, 28th August, Town & Country are inviting the general public along to their official opening weekend at the Merry Hill Factory Outlet, where the Coronation Street boys, Ashley (Steve Arnold) and Kirk (Andy Whyment) will be helping to dish out some free tasters, goodie bags and an autograph or two!

Suitable for the whole family, come rain or shine, there will be a bouncy castle for the kids and some great deals to be had for the Mum's and Dad's! Plus, the first 100 customers through the door on Saturday 26th August will be able to purchase a **3-5kg Bernard Matthew's Turkey for just £4!**

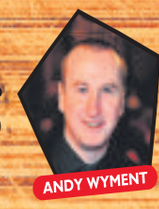
TOWN & COUNTRY MEATS

Town & Country will also be honouring the deals all Bank Holiday weekend across their four stores while stocks last. You can find their stores at Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Burton on Trent. Follow the Facebook page @TownandCountryMeats for more information and monthly deals.

TOWN & COUNTRY MEATS

MERRY HILL OUTLET
GRAND OPENING
BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND
26TH - 27TH - 28TH

Meet the stars of Coronation Street


ANDY WYMENT

STEVEN ARNOLD

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@TownandCountryMeats ...for more details

Navigation Drive, Hurst Business Park, DY5 1UT

Historic – Wolverhampton waterways by Mike Warville

Harry Parkes' photograph taken in Halesowen

Aaron Johal's pic outside Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

The Tipton Canal, by Mark Daniels, looks glorious at sunset

The entrance of Mary Stevens Park by Simon Beckett

Beauty of our home in focus

WHO would believe these stunning snaps were taken on a mobile phone?

Budding David Baileys have been capturing landmarks and scenes from Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge to Wolverhampton's waterways and Sandwell Council House.

Instameets uses the photograph sharing social network Instagram to allow keen amateurs with their mobile phones to enthusiasts and professionals to gather at a location to take pictures. Now a group has started in the Black Country.

And their rapidly expanding social media following is helping spread the word – and the pictures – to people far and wide.

Abi Garvey (@abigarveyphoto) Ed Brown (@notthetalkinghorse) and Steve Spencer (@stevie_spencer1973) established the IgersBlackCountry group on Instagram at the start of this year and it already has more than 700 followers. If you fancy having your work featured as the group's photo of the day, upload your images of the Black Country to Instagram using the hashtag #igers blackcountry

"A year on and several meets later we got chatting about having a day out, originally to go out looking for snow over Clee Hill in Shropshire, but we ended up staying local around Stourbridge," said Abi. "We had such a good fun day and got talking about doing more stuff together, sharing our love of all things photography. One thing lead to another and we decided we'd definitely meet up to do it all again and try and pull together other people from around the Black Country who share our passion for photography and love of the area."

The group picked the above images to show off the Black Country.

Steve said: "The images we've chosen here are a selection of those featured as our photo of the day.

"Who would have thought the canals could look so beautiful bathed in the setting sunlight or that a concrete multi-storey car park in Halesowen could be something you'd want to have on your wall?"

Instameets are also publicised on the group Instagram page's @IGBlackCountry. Ed said: "To get involved – you can follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Every day around 6pm we feature a photograph taken within the Black Country area with the aim of showcasing our industrial history and beautiful scenery that can be found here."

Nurses secure impressive trio of recognitions

HEALTH staff have scored a hat-trick after receiving national recognition in three top industry awards.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has been shortlisted in the Nursing Times Awards 2017 in three categories – continence promotion and care, nursing in the community and child and adolescent services.

The trust's continence advisors for care homes have made the shortlist in two categories. The community-based team, who work across the Dudley area, introduced two new roles to educate and support care home staff to provide the best care to patients. The new roles also include troubleshooting in care homes to advise staff and treat patients with complex needs to help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Improvements include introducing pagers in the children's outpatient department, which allows parents to leave the unit if their child is anxious, without the fear of missing their appointment.

Chief nurse Siobhan Jordan said: "It is fantastic that the fabulous work of these two teams to improve patient care has been recognised."

The winners will be announced on November 2 at Grosvenor House in London.

Station is on track to earn top award

COSELEY station has been shortlisted for the Best Small Station award by National Rail.

The shortlist comes after a nine-strong team of keen gardeners, who created an extensive garden on Platform 2, caught the eyes of the judging panel. The work was part of London Midland's Adopt a Station scheme.

Faye Lambert, London Midland's head of community rail, said: "A huge thank you to the station adopters."

The awards are in September.

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Raise Your Glass as Pink heads to V

The big decision for headliner Pink won't be what to include in her main stage set at V. It'll be what to leave out.

The seller of around 50 million albums and winner of three Grammys, one Brit, a Daytime Emmy and six MTV Video Music Awards has been working on her upcoming seventh album, Beautiful Trauma, which is out in October.

And when it comes to choosing her set list, she'll have to choose from six albums and 35 singles.

The hit-maker has scored some of the most important singles of the 2000s, including Get The Party Started, Who Knew, So What, Raise Your Glass, Perfect, Try, Just Give Me A Reason and Just Like Fire.

She has become increasingly successful throughout her career and her most recent studio album, The Truth About Love, was a number one in the USA, Canada, across Europe and in New Zealand.

It was released five years ago and looked at love, relationships, feminism, sexual prowess and social exclusion. She collaborated with Eminem, Lily Allen and Nate Ruess, from American band Fun.

A huge world tour followed, taking Pink through America, Australia and Europe.

She has since had a second child, a son, Jameson, to go with her daughter, Willow, and enjoyed time at home with her husband, Carey Hart, the professional motocross racer. The singer, described as the most trailblazing artist of her generation, lists Madonna and Janis Joplin as her two biggest heroes and she in turn has inspired Katy Perry, Kesha and Rihanna.

She has also acquired a new hobby, cultivating an organic vineyard in southern California after visiting leading wineries around the world. She describes her passion for wine as her 'dirty little secret' and says she started by taking online courses.

After that, she learned about pruning vines by taking her Beck album, listening to it through earphones and spending days pruning. Pink says she loved the ability to work for eight hours with nature and pruning quickly became her favourite thing.

She developed her 25-acre estate, which includes Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Grenache and Grenache Blanc. Her love of wine, however, has been a long-term thing. When she burst onto the scene at the end of the 1990s, her rider would include a bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

She told Decanter magazine: "When I made my [first] rider, I was 20 and I just put Châteauneuf-du-Pape on there because that was the wine that made me love wine."

Since then, when she's been travelling the world, she's visited some of the best wineries that there are. She admits she doesn't know too much about English wine – but is hoping to try a little after she headlines V.

Earlier this year, Pink teamed up with Sia to release a new song, Waterfall. They worked with Norwegian songwriters Stargate on the track. Stargate have previously written hits for Beyonce, Rihanna and Fifth Harmony.

Time to think Pink as the US superstar headlines one of the top festivals

Pink works hard to stay out of the Hollywood bubble and she has been a formidable campaigner for women's rights. On social media and in interviews, she has lashed out at body shamers and lambasted those who are judgemental about women's figures.

At the BMI Pop Awards, she said: "I don't take well to bullying. I never have. I'm not a person that will be bullied. I'm not a person that will stand by watching other people bullied.

"I am a girl, I have feelings and people think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, tougher than nails, but I'm a human being.

"I think people have gotten it wrong. They think their opinion matters and holds weight and I don't know where or why they're giving themselves so much credit, you know?

"So I thought it was important for me to remind them that I don't care. My life is full, I like food a lot and I really like to cook, I like to live, I find joy in that and were doing alright in the Hart household."

Pink has been lauded by critics for being that rarest of creatures – a true artist.

While other stars have been criticised for oversinging, being unable to sing or being vocal lightweights, Pink has maintained a brilliant career by being an authentic, powerhouse vocalist. One of the singers on whom she had the greatest impact was Adele, who saw her as a teenager on the Missundaztood tour, at Brixton Academy. Adele rated it as one of the defining moments of her life and said: "I had never heard, being in the room, someone sing like that live. I remember sort of feeling like I was in a wind tunnel, her voice just hitting me. It was incredible."

> *People think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, but I'm a human being*

SUPERBOWL

Adele isn't the only one to credit Pink's work as being inspirational – she's also loved by Demi Lovato, Kelly Clarkson, Taylor Swift and more.

Pink has also rushed to the defence of other female stars, including Lady Gaga who was criticised for copying her Superbowl performance by 'flying' through the air.

She took to Instagram using the hashtag #womensupportingwomen to support Lady Gaga and wrote: "Her voice was powerful and beautiful, her outfits were on point, choreography stellar, her heart was in it and she sang about love and inclusiveness, all in front of millions and millions of people."

Pink will be doing something similar this weekend – her fans can't wait.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

The animals - a not-so-subtle clue to the title of the band's biggest hit The Size of a Cow

Booking in to relive those Wonder years

SOLD out football stadia and number one hits – for a while, The Wonder Stuff became the region's biggest musical export since Slade and Led Zeppelin.

Led by the tousle-haired Miles Hunt, The Eight Legged Groove Machine became Top of the Pops habitués as they escaped their native Stourbridge and took on the world. Hunt, who for 22 years has lived in the Shropshire Hills, wrote instantly accessible songs that resonated with indie kids around the UK.

And though their first two albums were successful – The Eight Legged Groove Machine went to number 18 on the chart while Hup went to number five – it was their latter years, from 1990 to 1994, that brought them their greatest commercial success.

Their third album, Never Loved Elvis, was a number three hit and spawned the top five single Size Of A Cow while the successor, Construction For The Modern Idiot, also hit number four on the chart in 1993.

Successful albums weren't the only way of calibrating their success. The Wonder Stuff also filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium, packing 18,000 'Stuffies' into their local football club.

When they'd finally had enough, they did so in style. As they headlined a sold out Phoenix Festival with actress Anna Friel looking on, there were echoes of a lyric from the song Here Comes Everyone, which featured on Never Loved Elvis.

While The Wonder Stuff's 1990-1994 era coincided with their most successful age, it was also Hunt's unhappiest in the band. "I didn't enjoy any of it," he says.

Two years ago, Hunt chronicled The Wonder Stuff's early years in his book The Wonder Stuff Diaries '86-'89. In August, Hunt will publish the two compendium volumes, the first covering the years '90-'91 and the second covering the band's exit, '92-'94.

In '90-'91, Hunt picks up where he left off. Having lost an original member, Rob 'The Bass Thing' Jones, at the end of 1989 Hunt recalls the subsequent months pondering how the band might recover from such a blow.

Hunt says: "If my first book of diaries represented the ascent of The Wonder Stuff then this book represents the levelling out, the getting used to how things are going to be from here on in."

The latter book marks an era in which the band were enormously successful – but remarkably dysfunctional and unhappy. Hunt doesn't hide his disaffection with the band.

He says: "No matter how many records an artist sells it will never sate the hunger of the business end of the music business. It's a dreary environment for a creative person to find him or herself in and it would've took a much smarter person than I was back in the early 1990's to have got the balance right."

Hunt's life between 1990 and 1994 was utterly extraordinary. Having grown up and been inspired by his uncle, Bill, who was the keyboard player in ELO and Wizzard, he moved to Stourbridge at the age of 18 or 19 and hung out with mates who later formed Pop Will Eat Itself. The rest, as his diaries attest, is history. The diaries, collectively, chart The Wonder Stuff's remarkable rise.

ANDY RICHARDSON

The Wonder Stuff filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium

Miles Hunt at the Literary Festival in Wolverhampton

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SATURDAY'S TV AUGUST 19

CHOICE

Len Goodman

Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme
(Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in which two would-be poets battle it out through three rhyme-based challenges in a bid to claim a place in the final round, where they could win a holiday. Each competitor receives help from two celebrity assistants, who are on hand to back-up their assigned contestant in a variety of themed tasks.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.15 Film:** Toy Story. (1995) Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.
6.30 BBC News.
6.40 Regional Programme.
6.45 Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in two teams of celebrities help a pair of would-be poets battle through four rhyme-based challenges.
7.20 Pointless Celebrities. David Coulthard, Mark Webber, Allan McNish, Claire Williams, Murray Walker, Nigel Mansell, Christian Horner and Suzi Perry take part in a Formula One-themed edition of the quiz. (R)
8.05 Who Dares Wins.
8.45 Casualty. Medics from Holby head for France to offer their expertise to migrants stranded at a refugee camp. There, Alicia takes a shine to British medic Cameron Hamilton, who has been on the scene for a while, helping the camp's women and children. Meanwhile, Dylan finds himself becoming emotionally involved in the plight of two Sudanese orphans, who have fallen prey to ruthless people-traffickers, and back at the hospital, Connie is shocked to learn Sam has resigned and seems to have disappeared – taking Grace with him.
9.35 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes ends up at the wrong venue after trying to gatecrash Maria's hen party. She then tries to impress the bride-to-be's mother during a dinner date, but the evening ends in chaos. (R)
10.05 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.
10.25 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights from the latest Premier League.
11.50 People Just Do Nothing. New series. The spoof documentary going behind the scenes at pirate radio station Kurupt FM returns, as a rival station emerges, and Grindah spirals out of control.
12.20 Film: Tron: Legacy. (2010) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead.

BBC2

6.00 Coast. (R) **7.00 Film:** Return of the Bad Men. (1948) **8.30 Film:** Great Day in the Morning. (1956) **10.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.00** Ulster Derby Highlights. **12.00** Nigel and Adam's Farm Kitchen. (R) **1.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **1.45 Film:** Forbidden Planet. (1956) Sci-fi drama, starring Walter Pidgeon. **3.20** Mastermind. (R) **3.50** University Challenge. (R) **4.20** Only Connect. (R) **4.50** Gardeners' World. (R) **5.50** The Big Family Cooking Showdown. (R)
6.50 Proms Extra. Baritone singer Roderick Williams and composer Hannah Kendall join host Katie Derham in the studio. Tonight, she revisits Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2 in E minor, which the Scottish Symphony Orchestra performed as part of Prom 37 last Sunday, and the Aurora Orchestra's rendition of Beethoven's Eroica from Prom 10. Also featured is Prom 41's Passages, by Ravi Shankar and Philip Glass, performed by the Britten Sinfonia and Karen Kamensek alongside Shankar's daughter, the sitar virtuoso Anoushka Shankar.
7.30 Welcome to Edinburgh.
8.00 Iolo's Great Welsh Parks. Iolo Williams explores Margam Country Park on the outskirts of Port Talbot, which feature lakes and mature woodland with three species of deer and 11 species of bats.
8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring devises a cunning new way of foiling Hitler's invasion plans – but it results in Pike getting trapped in the middle of a minefield. (R)
9.00 Film: The Lady in the Van. (2015) The true story of writer Alan Bennett's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman, whom he befriended in the 1970s before allowing her to park her dilapidated Bedford van outside his Camden home, where she ended up staying for 15 years. Comedy-drama, starring Maggie Smith.
10.40 Being Alan Bennett. Cameras follow the author during key moments of his 75th year, revealing the apparent contradictions in his personality as he performs civic functions and prepares his new play. (R)
11.40 Film: The History Boys. (2006) Comedy drama, with Richard Griffiths.
1.30 Film: Henry V. (1989)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Gok's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** The Chase. (R) **1.25** Joanna Lumley's Postcards. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **3.00** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.00** Little Big Shots USA.
6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.05 ITV News; Weather.
6.20 You've Been Framed! Bounces Back! Harry Hill narrates another 60-minute special edition of the comical clip show, applying his unique brand of silly, satirical commentary to a selection of hilarious hi-jinks captured on video by viewers at home. (R)
7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. Last in the series.
8.00 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man. (2012) A gifted teenager investigates the secrets hidden in his dead parents' past, leading him to a mysterious corporation and an incident that imbues him with superhuman powers. A personal tragedy drives him to use his new-found abilities to fight crime, and he is soon drawn into a deadly battle against a former colleague of his father, who has undergone a devastating transformation of his own. Superhero adventure reboot, starring Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone and Rhys Ifans.
10.35 ITV News; Weather.
10.50 Film: The World Is Not Enough. (1999) James Bond is assigned to protect an oil heiress from an infamous terrorist planning to destroy a pipeline. Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan, Robert Carlyle and Sophie Marceau.
1.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **6.45** Triathlon: Long Course Weekend. **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **12.50** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Britain at Low Tide. Last in the series. (R)
8.00 Child Genius: The Final. Richard Osman hosts the final stage of the week-long contest, once again serving as quizmaster as five of Britain's brightest young minds battle it out to enter the final round, and secure a chance at the title. The first part of the final sees the contestants demonstrating their mastery of a degree-level specialist subject of their choice. The subjects are Edward Jenner: Medical Innovation and Methodology in the late 18th Century, Pre-Socratic Philosophy, Military Campaigns of the Yellow Turban Rebellion – 184-205CE, Martin Luther King Jr, and London in 1666: Society, Politics and the Urban Environment in the Year of the Great Fire. Only the two highest scoring competitors from the specialist round will make it through to the last, head-to-head buzzer contest, which will result in one youngster claiming the title of Child Genius 2017. Last in the series.
9.00 Film: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire. (2013) Sci-fi adventure sequel based on the second book in Suzanne Collins' trilogy of novels, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Liam Hemsworth and Donald Sutherland.
11.50 Film: X-Men. (2000) Mutant outsiders with strange powers fight to defend mankind from a superhuman terrorist faction. Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Hugh Jackman.
1.35 The Windsors. (R) **2.05** Hollyoaks. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.05** Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.25** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.50 Film:** Igor. (2008) **12.25** Disobedient Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.20** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.20** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R)
6.05 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A Devon woman spends a night in the cells after a dispute with a neighbour who happens to be a policeman, while a York man gets an unexpected soaking after an argument. (R)
7.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Paul Bohill and Phil Short must deal with a negligent tenant who fled upon their arrival, forcing the agents to set a trap in order to evict him. Meanwhile, Brian O'Shaughnessy and Kevin Stokes chase a debt of £5,000 in Kent, before heading to Surrey to recover £11,000 owed by the owner a bespoke furniture business. Plus, Paul and Steve Pinner's patience is tested to the limit when they are sent to carry out an eviction in London. (R)
8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents Stewart and Elmore face the most challenging eviction of their careers, while Brian and Del chase £2,000 worth of debt owed by a business based in Kent. (R)
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Sheffield United v Barnsley, Aston Villa v Norwich City, and Sunderland v Leeds United.
10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Bradford City v Blackburn Rovers, and Forest Green Rovers v Yeovil Town.
10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights from Friday, including the contestants' reactions to the eviction, plus more games, gossip and diary room confessions.
11.30 Lip Sync Battle UK: Rufus Hound v Jorgie Porter. (R)
12.00 Cricket on 5. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R) **4.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.45** Access. **4.55** Great Scientists. (R) **5.25** Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Brain with David Eagleman **8.00** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.55** Bob Monkhouse: The Last Stand **12.00** The Secret Life of Bob Monkhouse **1.25** David Bowie and the Story of Ziggy Stardust **2.30** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.40 Catchphrase **12.25** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **12.55** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.20** You've Been Framed! Goes Wild! **2.25 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **3.25** FYI Daily **3.30 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **4.15 Film:** St Trinian's (2007) **5.15** FYI Daily **5.20 Film:** St Trinian's (2007) **6.10 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **8.00 Film:** Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10 Film:** Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) **10.20** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.20** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **2.10** Viral Tap **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
1.00 The Darling Buds of May **2.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.05 Film:** Carry On Camping (1969) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Carry On Camping (1969) **5.55** Wycliffe **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **1.55** Rising Damp

ITV4
11.00 Cash Cowboys **1.00** Storage Wars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newbury, Newmarket and Ripon. Oli Bell and Francesca Cumani present coverage of today's meetings. **4.00** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **5.30** Storage Wars **6.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **10.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.05 Film:** Blade (1998) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Blade (1998)

E4
12.15 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **12.30** The Goldbergs **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** Don't Tell the Bride **6.30 Film:** Beautiful Creatures (2013) **9.00 Film:** I Give It a Year (2013) **11.00** Gogglebox **1.05** Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful **2.15** Tattoo Fixers

Film4
11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) **1.00** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **2.50** Epic (2013) **4.55** Carry On Teacher (1959) **6.40** The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) **8.55** Patti Cake$ Interview Special **9.00** I, Frankenstein (2014) **10.45** Attack the Block (2011) **12.30** The Windmill Massacre (2016)

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 20

CHOICE

Sam Otto

The State (Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. Drama following the experiences of four British men and women who left their lives behind to join Isis in 2015. A man hoping to follow in his brother's footsteps has persuaded his best friend to join him, while a single mother hopes to provide medical aid and a teenager embraces the radical doctrines she has encountered online. The recruits cross into Syria under cover of darkness, where the men begin combat training and the women are introduced to the society's strict rules. Continues tomorrow.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.15** Songs of Praise. **2.50** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **5.10** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **5.40** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme.

6.05 Countryfile. Summer special from the Blenheim Estate in Oxfordshire. Ellie Harrison meets an aspiring actress-turned-accidental cow artist, John Craven uncovers one of the house's greatest secrets, Adam Henson brings the farmyard to the showground, and Tom Heap discovers how the estate's forests help the local community.

7.05 Fake or Fortune? New series. Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould investigate a landscape that may be a lost painting by Constable, and an alternate view of his masterpiece The Hay Wain. The painting is currently owned by a Gloucestershire businessman and seems to have all the hallmarks of Constable's early sketches, as well as clear signs that it depicts the same location as The Hay Wain – but was dismissed as another artist's work 30 years previously. The case proves particularly personal for Philip, who is one of the artwork's previous owners.

8.05 Film: Far from the Madding Crowd. (2015) Premiere. A headstrong Victorian woman inherits a sheep farm in a remote area of Dorset. She struggles to maintain her independence while being courted by three very different men – a stoic farmer, a dashing, reckless soldier and a lonely older man. Period drama based on Thomas Hardy's novel, starring Carey Mulligan, Matthias Schoenaerts, Tom Sturridge and Michael Sheen.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.

11.30 Film: Dream House. (2011) Horror, starring Daniel Craig, Naomi Watts and Rachel Weisz.

12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.00** Garden Rescue. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Countryfile. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain. (R) **1.30** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **2.50** Flog It! (R) **3.45** Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. (R) **4.45** Equestrian.

6.50 Tribes, Predators & Me. Gordon Buchanan travels to remote regions on three continents to learn how tribal cultures hunt and live alongside dangerous animals, beginning his journey in Ecuador, where he meets a family from the Waorani tribe. They venture into the Amazon Jungle, where the Waorani hunt monkeys and wild pigs using blowpipes and sharpened sticks, and try to trap an anaconda, an animal of great spiritual significance. (R)

7.50 Meet the New Dragons. An introduction to Dragons' Den's new panellists, Tej Lalvani, CEO of vitamins company Vitabiotics, and Jenny Campbell, founder of ATM provider YourCash Europe Ltd.

8.00 Dragons' Den. New series. Evan Davis hosts the business ideas challenge, which sees vitamin company CEO Tej Lalvani and cash machine tycoon Jenny Campbell joining returning Dragons Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones and Touker Suleyman to cast an eye over more money-making schemes – with the largest investments in the show's history up for grabs. The first batch of entrepreneurs braving the den present their ideas for an allergy-friendly food range, astroturf for schools and youth centres, and a voucher code website that could revolutionise online shopping.

9.00 Astronauts: Do You Have What it Takes? New series. A group of 12 people compete against each other through six weeks of astronaut training, with the winner receiving support in pursuing a career with a space agency.

10.00 Ill Behaviour. New series. Starring Chris Geere.

11.00 Film: The Hunter. (2011) Drama, starring Willem Dafoe.

12.35 Film: Tommy. (1975) **2.10** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Long Lost Family. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **1.00** Rebound. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.25 Film:** Licence to Kill. (1989) James Bond spy thriller, starring Timothy Dalton.

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.10 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 The Chase Celebrity Special. Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Jay Rayner, Lucy Porter, Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Steve Davis pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.

7.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2. (2011) The young wizard continues his search for the artefacts containing fragments of the dark lord Voldemort's soul. Time is running out, as the evil sorcerer is aware of Harry's mission, and marshals his forces for a final, devastating attack on Harry and his friends at Hogwarts school. Conclusion of the fantasy saga, with Daniel Radcliffe, Ralph Fiennes, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson and Alan Rickman.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Judge Rinder's Crime Stories. Barrister Robert Rinder examines the case of murderer Kenneth Noye, who was the target of an international manhunt after stabbing a man to death on the M25. (R)

11.15 Take Me Out. (R)

12.35 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Last Man Standing. **6.25** Last Man Standing. **6.50** Last Man Standing. **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** The Simpsons. (R) **2.05** The Simpsons. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** The Simpsons. (R) **3.35** Toy Story Toons. (R) **4.05 Film:** Toy Story That Time Forgot. (2014) Short animated comedy, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. **4.30 Film:** Tangled. (2010) Disney animated comedy, with the voice of Mandy Moore.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. New series. George Clarke presides over the 2017 Shed of the Year competition, beginning with the cabins and summerhouses category. Among the contenders are a mushroom-shaped shed and a pink and turquoise construction inspired by a Los Angeles pool house. This year's contest will feature a new category, for unusual sheds that push the boundaries of construction in ingenious ways.

8.00 From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier. New series. Levison Wood travels across the Caucasus mountain range, which run for 2600 miles across five countries on the border between Europe and Asia. The expedition begins on Russia's heavily militarised southern border, where he has to avoid the local police. The first leg of the journey takes him through the ruins of ancient civilisations, the notorious former battleground of Chechnya, and the territory of Islamist terrorists.

9.00 The State. New series. Drama following the experiences of four British men and women who left their lives behind to join Isis in 2015. The recruits cross into Syria under cover of darkness. Continues tomorrow.

10.00 Film: The Gunman. (2015) After spending years in hiding, a mercenary becomes the latest target of his former colleagues. Crime drama, starring Sean Penn and Idris Elba.

12.10 Film: Belle. (2013) **2.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.50** Gillette World Sport. **3.20** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.45** Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. (R) **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wissper. (R) **7.05** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.20** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Floogals. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.00** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad Special. (R) **2.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits. (R) **3.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits 2. (R) **3.55** Police Interceptors: Drugs Bust. (R) **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00** Biggest Dog in the World. (R)

6.00 The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos. Part one of two. The return of the documentary following the early stages of dogs' lives. An English bulldog is piling on the pounds and is given a new exercise regimen. (R)

6.45 The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos. Part two of two. Big Ron makes big progress with his weight-loss programme, while eight-month-old French Bulldog Betsy turns her hand to doggy modelling. (R)

7.30 The Ant & Dec Story. Documentary celebrating much-loved duo Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly, who in a career already spanning more than 25 years, have conquered almost every part of the TV schedules, from anarchic children's programmes to some of the biggest shows, including the Queen's recent birthday celebrations. Contributors include friends, fans and some of the celebrities who have fallen foul of the duo's trademark tricks, or actually found fame through their formats. (R)

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother.

10.05 Before They Were Stars. Dale Winton treks back through the TV archive to uncover embarrassing early brushes with fame endured by some of today's biggest stars.

12.05 Cricket on 5. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Do We Really Need the Moon? **8.00** BBC Proms 2017 **10.40** The Treasure Hunters **12.40** James May at the Edge of Space **1.10** The Rules of Abstraction with Matthew Collings **2.40** The Art of Australia **3.40** Close

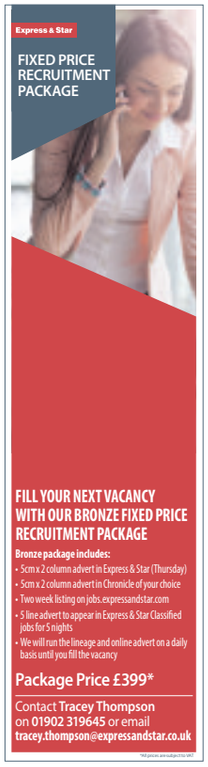
ITV2
11.55 Ninja Warrior UK **1.00** Mr Bean **2.05 Film:** Honey (2003) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10 Film:** Honey (2003) **4.00 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.50 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.05** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Viral Tap **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.40 The Darling Buds of May **12.45** Heidi **2.50** Wycliffe **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Margery and Gladys **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **2.05** Margery and Gladys **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.30 FYI Daily **11.35 Film:** Everything or Nothing: The Untold Story of 007 (2012) **12.15** Storage Wars: Texas **1.15** Storage Wars **1.40** The Big Fish Off **2.45** River Monsters **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **11.30 Film:** Life on the Limit (2013) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** Life on the Limit (2013) **1.35** Quincy ME **2.25** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** The Goldbergs **1.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Specials **8.00 Film:** Shallow Hal (2001) **10.15** Don't Tell the Bride **11.20** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.25** Body Fixers **1.30** Gogglebox **2.30** Rude Tube: Superstars of the Web **3.25** Rude Tube **3.50** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Carry On Nurse (1959) **1.00** Antz (1998) **2.40** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **4.45** Multiplicity (1996) **7.00** Patti Cake$ Interview Special **7.05** Hocus Pocus (1993) **9.00** The Drop (2014) **11.10** Splice (2009) **1.15** Isolation (2005) **3.10** Close



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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!, BBC2, 1.30pm
The bungling leader of a band of inept buccaneers is determined to prove his worth to his rivals and win the coveted Pirate of the Year award. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Grant, Martin Freeman, Imelda Staunton and David Tennant. (2012)

TUESDAY
The Odd Life of Timothy Green, BBC2, 1.45pm
A couple bury a box containing their wishes for the perfect child they are unable to have. Soon afterwards, a mysterious boy with leaves growing from his feet shows up on their doorstep, claiming to be their son. Fantasy, with Jennifer Garner and Joel Edgerton. (2012)

WEDNESDAY
Flushed Away, BBC2, 1.35pm
A pampered pet rodent is flushed down a toilet and ends up in a vast underground rat city in the sewers of London. He is befriended by a quick-witted rat who offers to help him find his way home. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen and Shane Richie. (2006)

Up in the Air, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

THURSDAY
Cars 2, BBC2, 1.45pm
Racing car Lightning McQueen heads overseas to compete in an international grand prix, with events in Britain, Japan and Italy. He gets mixed up in international espionage when a case of mistaken identity leads to an encounter with two English spy cars. Pixar animated adventure sequel, with the voices of Owen Wilson and Michael Caine. (2011)

FRIDAY
Up in the Air, BBC1, 11.50pm
A corporate downsizing expert loves his life, detached from everyday existence and striving to achieve a personal goal of 10 million accumulated air miles. However, his lifestyle comes under threat by an up-and-coming executive with a revolutionary approach that would make his role all but obsolete. Comedy drama, starring George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick and Jason Bateman (2009)

Rory proves that laughter is the best medicine

If you saw sublime British comedy Man Up the other week on BBC Two, you might have been impressed by the frisson between Simon Pegg and Lake Bell's characters. However, doing a lot of the comedic heavy lifting was Rory Kinnear.

He's also been one of the strongest assets in the Count Arthur Strong BBC series, and as good as Michael Kitchen's Bill Tanner was in a couple of 007 adventures, after the success of recent James Bond offerings and video games, it's hard to imagine anyone else in the role.

Now Rory returns in the second edition of James Wood's period sitcom Quacks, which took a while making the leap from pilot episode to full blown series.

"I did the pilot," explains Rory. "Then it took more than a year before we were all available to get back together, which meant that James had time to work on the scripts and get everything in place. Then we could rehearse a month before we even started filming, which is an unbelievable position to be in."

There have been plenty of medical sitcoms over the years, from the Doctor on the Go series in the 1970s to Surgical Spirit a decade later. However, setting one in the 19th-century is one of the things that inspired Rory to sign up.

"I quite like doing stuff that I haven't necessarily seen before or feels reasonably distinctive, and James is so meticulous and thorough about his research that it's funny to do," he reveals.

With any period sitcom, there are bound to be comparisons with Blackadder, and use the setting as an excuse for slapstick, but Wood has managed to exploit the era itself.

As Rory explains, it was a "period of grim discovery and invention" into techniques that many 21st-century medics will take for granted. "All these people were pioneering new techniques that all of our lives have improved from, but equally there would have been plenty of failures along the way as well."

How does Quacks compare to the other projects he's worked on?

"The sets are quite lavish... Obviously having done Penny Dreadful for Showtime, that's set in a similar-ish time but a bit later. But in terms of sets and costume that have been created with this level of detail, it feels incredibly detailed and lavish."

In this week's offering, Rory is reunited with Spectre co-star Andrew Scott, in the guise of one of Blighty's best loved writers.

When Caroline (Lydia Leonard) lands an invitation to meet her hero, Charles Dickens (Scott), William (Matthew Baynton) finds himself in an awkward position when he exaggerates how much of a fan he is.

Meanwhile, John (Tom Basden) takes an orphan under his wing, and Robert (Kinnear) crosses paths with an uppity young volunteer called Florence Nightingale (Milly Thomas) who starts interfering with his work.

Dr Hendrick (Rupert Everett) is keen to curry favour with the nurse, and her influential family, so Robert has to work out how to get rid of her.

Rory Kinnear, Tom Basden and Mathew Baynton star in Quacks, Tuesday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Streetmate
Channel 4, 5.30pm
Some readers may remember the 1998 to 2001 show in which Davina McCall played Cupid on the streets of the UK. A sort of Blind Date on the hoof, and like that matchmaking series which was revamped recently, Streetmate has also been given a new lease of life. With Ms McCall busy reuniting relatives on Long Lost Family, presenting duties are now courtesy of Scarlett Moffatt. Stripped across the week, the new series should help boost little Ms Moffatt's fanbase, and prove an engaging way to ease down after a hard day.

Jamie's Quick & Easy Food
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Jamie Oliver offers viewers the ultimate set of go-to recipes for quick and easy-to-remember cooking having developed a collection of tasty dishes that each use just five ingredients, producing stress-free meals perfect for busy days and for those people who don't have the time or energy to devote to complicated cooking. On the menu in the first edition are seared scallops with black pudding, mashed potatoes and peas, as well as egg and mango chutney flatbreads, rib-eye steak, and an almond pastry puff.

TUESDAY
The Big Family Cooking Showdown
BBC2, 8pm
As Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain's culinary competition continues, the Karim family from west London go up against the Dawes from Hampshire. Aunt Zakila is queen of the kitchen in the Karim's household, but will her spice mix leave the judges wanting more when they visit the family at home? Ellie Dawes and her scientist boyfriend Sam share a passion for food, but it remains to be seen whether their bold use of ingredients will be a step too far for judges Rosemary Shrager and Giorgio Locatelli.

WEDNESDAY
Love Your Garden
ITV, 8pm
It's the last in the current series – and to mark the occasion, Alan Titchmarsh and the team are carrying out not one but two makeovers. They're in Nottingham to meet Marcellus Baz, who had something of a misspent youth, getting involved in gangs and pretty crime. However, the discipline of boxing helped to turn his life around, and now, at the age of 41, he's doing the same for troubled teens at his gym. Marcellus would love to turn the dank outside yard into a garden where the kids can learn to grow and cook healthy fruit and vegetables. But what he doesn't know is that as a thank you for all his hard work, Alan and co are planning to give him a new-look garden at home too.

THURSDAY
Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 8pm
TV presenter Fearne Cotton traces her family history, paying particular attention to her great grandfather Evan Meredith. Evan had worked down a coal mine from the age of 13 before training as a chemist, but one part of his life he was unwilling to talk about were his experiences in the First World War. Fearne delves into this period and discovers how he risked his freedom to follow his conscience. Turning to her mother's side of the family, she uncovers an ambitious ancestor.

Who Do You Think You Are?, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

FRIDAY
The Crystal Maze
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Richard Ayoade guides members of the Watson family through the Aztec, Medieval, Industrial and Future zones, inviting 22-year-old captain Catriona, her mother Fiona and three others to tackle a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges to win some all-important crystals. The players need secure as many as possible in order to maximise the amount of time they can spend within the legendary Crystal Dome for their final test.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final
Channel 5, 9pm
Fifteen famous faces entered the Celebrity Big Brother house 24 days ago, and it wasn't long before some of them began to crack under the pressure. However, the tears and tantrums are almost over for another series as Emma Willis (who will be glad for a break having fronted the regular show over the summer too), whittles the remaining housemates down one by one until the winner is announced. Coleen Nolan defeated Jedward to triumph in the 19th edition of CBB back in January, but who will succeed the singer as the champ tonight and pocket £50,000 for their chosen charity?

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BRAIN GYM

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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

	12		1	26	13	1	10	21	15		3	
15	20	4	20			10			20	5	26	13
	19		13			21			19		21	
4	11	13	1	11	10	11	12	11			10	
21		11				9		25	2	11	10	21
22	26	23		21				11		23		15
6		7	11	24	14	15	21	22	13	12		14
21		22		14				15		2	14	7
12	21	11	6	7		6				20		20
	23			6	26	23	17	10	20	25	21	22
	4		4			14			15		18	
8	20	15	11			18			15	22 R	14 I	18
	12		1	22	21	21	16	21	6		8	

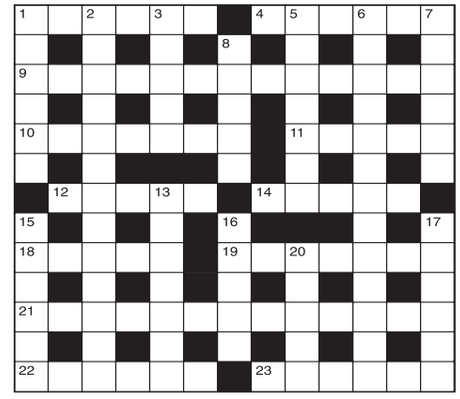
1	14 I
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22 R
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Y	U	D	V	F	N	C	K	L	W	G	Q	T
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	J	O	P	A	R	B	Z	M	X	H	I	S

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. They're purely symbolic (6)
4. Free with money (6)
9. Promises, but only donates a single weapon (5,4,4)
10. Assemble for a prayer (7)
11. Of one's birth in S Africa (5)
12. Takes in a form of food (5)
14. It's cut from the wedding cake (5)
18. All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
19. A political favour? (7)
21. The drink to lay one low? (5-3,5)
22. Untidy arrangement that would horrify Mrs Grundy! (6)
23. Right, put one's pay around making bets (6)

Down

1. What is left (6)
2. One has to be uncommonly rich to do so (4,4,1,4)
3. Directions to prosecute follow (5)
5. The attendant's not responsible for it (7)
6. Only a few words but they may carry conviction (5,8)
7. Posers seldom resolved (6)
8. Complications that naturally go against the grain (5)
13. Small article produced by an erratic knitter? (7)
15. Call around to watch TV (4,2)
16. It has been known to be tickled to death (5)
17. Gets engaged when he is in a bit of trouble (6)
20. Mince pies having a brown colour (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Concealed (6)
4. Mean (6)
9. Unaided (3,4,3,3)
10. United States (7)
11. Weird (5)
12. Jumped (5)
14. Postpone (5)
18. Garret (5)
19. Superintend (7)
21. In a somersault (4,4,5)
22. Scabbard (6)
23. Bomb hole (6)

Down

1. Turkish pipe (6)
2. Discriminate (13)
3. Boredom (5)
5. Not in any place (7)
6. Confusion (13)
7. Tremble (6)
8. Attempt (5)
13. Select (4,3)
15. Sentiment (6)
16. Arbour (5)
17. Hot spring (6)
20. Anaesthetic (5)

Sudoku

1					4		6	
4		7		9				3
	6	8	7		5			4
9						4	1	
					3			
	7	4		5				8
			5		7	8	2	
5				2			4	1
	2	9	1					6

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	8	7	4	6	1	2	5	9
5	6	9	2	3	7	4	1	8
4	1	2	5	9	8	7	6	3
9	4	6	3	2	5	8	7	1
1	5	8	6	7	9	3	4	2
7	2	3	8	1	4	6	9	5
2	7	1	9	4	3	5	8	6
6	9	5	7	8	2	1	3	4
8	3	4	1	5	6	9	2	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Desk calendar; 7 Fused; 8 Gusto; 9 Run; 10 Treatment; 11 Breaks; 12 Lay off; 15 Turnstile; 17 Ski; 18 Romeo; 19 Earns; 21 Racketeering.
Down: 1 Distributors; 2 Cos; 3 Ladder; 4 Nightmare; 5 Aisle; 6 Cost of living; 7 Fence; 10 Take stock; 13 Oasis; 14 Direct; 16 Rumba; 20 Rue.
QUICK - Across: 1 Recollection; 7 Cheat; 8 Spine; 9 Pea; 10 Derringer; 11 Relish; 12 Remiss; 15 Tortoises; 17 Aim; 18 Older; 19 Limit; 21 Celebrations.
Down: 1 Recuperation; 2 Lie; 3 Entire; 4 Testiness; 5 Owing; 6 Refreshments; 7 Crawl; 10 Discourse; 13 Inapt; 14 Ostler; 16 Ridge; 20 Mat.

Quiz

1. What is patchouli?
2. What type of bird is a budgerigar?
3. Which Clockwork Orange star kills Captain Kirk in Star Trek: Generations?
4. To which group of islands do North and South Uist belong?
5. Which Italian conductor was appointed music director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 1990s?
6. Who was England's last Plantagenet king?
7. A marimba is a bass variety of which instrument?
8. Which environmental pressure group was founded in the UK in 1969?
9. What is the Australian town Coober Pedy famous for mining?
10. Who succeeded Peter Taylor as permanent manager of Leicester City?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Europe and Asia; 2 Crustacean; 3 Coronation Street; 4 Norman Mailer; 5 Roger Kemble; 6 Mount Kenya; 7 Tony Blair; 8 Irish; 9 Kobe; 10 John Nash.

Niner: SUBLIMATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

12767 gives a girl's name,
329784 gives a second girl's name,
9755748 gives a third girl's name.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Flavours – fresh out of Thailand

FRESH layout, fresh food and a fresh experience – one word to describe our first ever foray into the wonderful world of Thai food . . . fresh.

Having eaten a friend's Thai cuisine efforts – and very good they were too – to say we had never experienced the delicacy would be overstating the fact.

However, just like you can't beat a curry from your favourite curry house, I'm pretty sure it must be the same for Thai food having enjoyed a wonderful meal at Thai Banana Leaf in Kingswinford.

It was a special occasion, my wife's birthday – and it being on Monday – we decided to go for something a bit more relaxed and this Thai restaurant ticked the box. We were playing a bit of risky game, as our two-year-old daughter was with us. Risky because the restaurant didn't take bookings until 6pm, so it was going to be a fairly late finish. But it was a decision that paid off.

Packed with the flavour – the sea bass dish

Worth a visit – the Thai Banana Leaf

LAYOUT

We were one of two groups eating while we were there – the other being a couple – but the waitress had kindly placed us beside the fish tank, which kept our daughter entertained for ages.

The layout was how you would expect: plenty of neatly-arranged tables, oriental statues and paintings, and of course the fish tank.

We had been told Thai food lives by five fundamental taste senses in each dish – sour, sweet, salty, bitter and spicy – which was like a set of rules sent down from heaven for someone with a palate like mine.

I went for the Fisherman's Soup, a spicy mixed seafood soup with lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves and mushrooms. Handily, every dish also comes with a 'chilli' chart, which simply meant the more chillis the higher intensity. Kelly went for the deep fried spring roll duck, served with hoi sin sauce. The first thing to mention about that dish was its size. There were four spring rolls when two would probably have sufficed. It was all eaten, but someone with a smaller appetite might want to try something else.

We had asked on arrival about a children's menu and, to be fair, there is the likes of fish fingers on the starter menu which, when ordered with a side order of chips, would make a good alternative.

Annabelle has always been good at experimenting with food so we decided to give one of the main dishes a go and went for the Pud See Eaw, stir fried rice noodles with broccoli, spring green, bean sprouts and egg.

As she loves broccoli and scrambled egg, we thought it was worth a go, especially as it came with a choice of chicken, which we went for, or pork, beef, duck, prawns or a vegetarian option.

It turned out to be a great decision because she really enjoyed the combination and even gave the spring greens and bean sprouts a go.

I decided to stick to the fish theme and the seafood pad prik, stir fried seafood with red curry paste, garlic, pepper, spring onion and coriander with oyster sauce served on sizzling plate, caught my eye, while Kelly went for a whole steamed sea bass with ginger and spring onions in soy sauce.

There was so much to choose from too so, if you're not a massive seafood fan, fear not as sizzling platters, chefs specials, set menus, and noodle and rice dishes are also available.

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PROPERTY

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Stunning four-bed detached has been extended

A stunning, first quality, detached four-bedroomed property, 1, Chevening Close, Sedgley, has been extended and is within walking distance of the Bull Ring.

Presented to an exemplary order throughout, it is for sale through Taylors at £265,000.

With gas central heating and double glazing, its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, a lounge, a dining room, a re-fitted kitchen (with various integrated appliances), a pantry, a re-fitted utility room and a fitted cloakroom/WC.

On the first floor there are four generous double bedrooms and a re-appointed shower room.

Outside is a garage, an extensive block paved driveway and a sheltered/secluded rear garden.

In more detail, the property is in an attractive modern design, with an integral garage. It is attractively presented throughout in neutral modern shades. To the frontage is ample off road parking via a modern block-paved full width driveway.

The lounge has wood-effect flooring, a bow window overlooking the frontage and a feature fireplace with a wooden surround.

Double doors open to the dining room which is positioned to the rear of the home, overlooking the rear garden. From here sliding patio doors open to the rear garden and this room also features wood-effect flooring.

The rear garden has a substantial full width block paved terraced which is divided from a mature lawn area via a short heigh wall with decorative fencing and a gate.

The kitchen is a good size. It has contemporary light wood-effect units with modern chrome handles. These are complemented by darker working surfaces and floor and splash-back tiling, which is repeated to the utility room.

Upstairs the bedrooms are all of a good size and the re-appointed shower room is in an appealing contemporary design.

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KIDDERMINSTER
£225,000

An impressive and extended family home in a popular suburban residential area, 84, Aster Avenue, Kidderminster is for sale through Halls at £225,000.

The property has been much improved and extended creating spacious family accommodation over two floors. It has four bedrooms and a family bathroom to the first floor and three reception rooms with a modern fitted kitchen and ground floor WC. There are fabulous low maintenance private rear gardens with off road parking and a garage to the front. Internal inspection is thoroughly recommended to appreciate the improvements and size of this attractive family home.

For further information on this charming property, or to book a viewing, contact Halls on 01562 820880 or visit www.hallsgb.com

Outstanding home sits on a generous corner plot

WOMBOURNE
£525,000 <<<

This outstanding and substantial modern detached family home in Millfields Way, Wombourne is for sale through Taylors at £525,000.

On a generous corner position, the property comes with a large driveway, a double garage and a sunny/private rear garden.

The four reception rooms include the impressive large lounge, a separate dining room, a second sitting room, a large home office, two guest cloakroom/WCs with potential for the creation of ground floor living if required for elderly relative etc.

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•Secure underground parking
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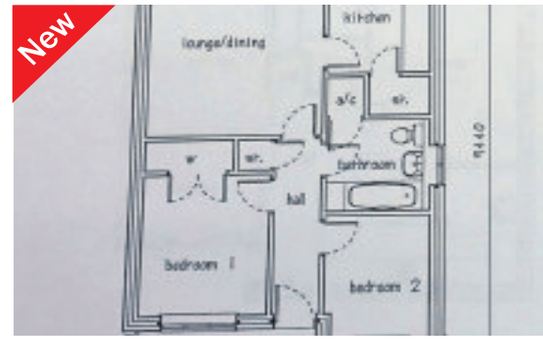
No upward chain — £525,000

DUDLEY, Yarner Close, Milking Bank

Situated in short cul-de-sac just off Sovereign Drive; a SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed, much improved, detached family home comprising; porch, hallway, lounge, dining room, refitted kitchen (with various integrated appliances), pantry, refitted utility room, cloakroom. Principal bedroom with shower room en suite, three further bedrooms (one with a fine range of 'Sharpes' fitted units), bathroom with white contemporary style suite. Garage, gardens, EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £259,950

New



UPPER GORNAL , Vale Street

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCMENT! Construction has now commenced on a gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed DETACHED BUNGALOW, short walk from major bus routes with the accommodation to include reception hall, store, lounge/dining room (patio doors out to garden), well equipped kitchen (with various integrated appliances) two bedrooms (one with built in wardrobes), bathroom, garage parking for 2 vehicles, secluded rear garden. Plans available (by appointment) - at Sedgley Office.

Offers in the region of £210,000

WOMBOURNE, Planks Lane

An IMPRESSIVE SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME, set back beyond the GENEROUS FRONT DRIVEWAY with GARAGE and a GOOD SIZED LEVEL & SUNNY REAR GARDEN, superbly located within Wombourne village, offering a VERY WELL PRESENTED layout including THREE LARGE BEDROOMS. EPC D

Now available — £209,950

New

COSELEY , Breen Rydding Drive

Fabulously proportioned EXTENDED DETACHED property, within walking distance of local amenities and schools and benefiting from; entrance hall, through lounge, kitchen-diner, utility, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden, garage, driveway, double glazing and gas central heating. Viewing ESSENTIAL. EPC Rating C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £209,950

New

COSELEY, Bramford Estate, Elmdale Road

INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS! An EXTENDED gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi detached home. Stunning accommodation includes enlarged porch, reception hall, store, lounge with bay, dining room (with open fire) opening out into a large lofty family room with bio fold doors out to garden, refitted kitchen with various appliances and range, utility room, fitted cloakroom, store. FOUR BEDROOMS, (principle bedroom with en suite) bathroom. Secluded rear garden. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £200,000

New

KINGSWINFORD, Bobeche Place

An IMMACUALTE SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME, around 3 years old, with NHBC Warranty, superbly, offering a STUNNING layout including THREE BEDROOMS, master with En Suite Set beyond the BROAD DRIVEWAY and to the rear enjoying a good sized rear garden. EPC C

£186,950

New

LOWER GORNAL , Wallows Wood

Beautifully presented and well maintained traditional semi-detached property located in the sought after area of LOWER GORNAL in Dudley. Benefiting from central heating and double glazing, this family home also boasts porch, hallway, living room, open-plan kitchen-diner, utility, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, stunning enclosed rear garden and driveway to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £179,950

New

KINGSWINFORD, Standhills Road

A INCREDIBLY DECEPTIVE SEMI-DETACHED DORMER BUNGALOW which is very well placed in a convenient location, offering a VERY WELL PRESENTED and GENEROUS layout of accommodation which includes a CONSERVATORY and TWO LARGE DOUBLE BEDROOMS. With DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a LARGE REAR GARDEN. EPC D

No upward chain — £174,950

New

KINGSWINFORD, Lydgate Road

Very well placed, enjoying a LONG FRONT/SIDE DRIVEWAY, CAR PORT, SECTIONAL GARAGE and a delightful level and private rear garden, this MODERN SEMI DETACHED BUNGALOW is superbly located and offers GENEROUS layout which includes TWO GOOD BEDROOMS. EPC D

£169,950

New

COSELEY, Bramford Estate, Greenoak Crescent

Being offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN, and benefiting from central heating and double glazing, this traditional semi detached property also has, entrance porch, living room, dining room, re-fitted kitchen, family bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS, garage, enclosed rear garden and drive for multiple vehicles to front. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £169,950

LOWER GORNAL , Lake Street

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL! - Highly individual 'quirky' double glazed gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler) link-detached upon wide plot (with garage) and lengthy rear garden comprising; entrance vestibule, living room, lobby, cloakroom, pantry, kitchen. Two large bedrooms (possibilities of sub division?), bathroom. Delightful garden and 16ft width from side gable to boundary wall with gated access. EPC: E SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £134,000

New

SEDGLEY, Beacon Lane

REMARKABLY SPACIOUS conscientiously maintained gas centrally heated and UPVC double glazed intermediate home. Accommodation provides reception hall, spacious lounge, transverse breakfast kitchen with a range of 'American walnut' effect units, store, outer porch, separate WC. Three generous bedrooms, bathroom, good size garden. Distant views from front and rear. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £132,500

COSELEY, Broad Lanes

An extremely well presented traditional, semi-detached property which benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. A well-proportioned starter home with parking to rear, also boasts; TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, THREE BEDROOMS, refitted kitchen, utility area, attractive bathroom, rear garden and offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950

New

COSELEY , Ivyhouse Lane

A traditional semi detached property located in the popular Coseley area of Wolverhampton. This THREE BEDROOM starter home benefits from double glazing, entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, ground-floor bathroom, workshop and enclosed rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offer in the region of £109,950

SEDGLEY, Kings Road

SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL. A traditional, gas centrally heated (combi boiler) intermediate terrace for improvement set in favoured district convenient for the many amenities around Sedgley's Bull Ring comprising; living room, lobby, store, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, Two double bedrooms, further box room. Delightful rear garden. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £95,000

New

COSELEY, Hurst Hill , Johnson Street

A well-presented TRADITIONAL END OF TERRACED property ideal for first time buyers or someone looking to downsize. Within walking distance of local amenities and transport links, this TWO BEDROOM comprises of gas central heating, double glazing, living room, good-sized re-fitted kitchen, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden and is offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £89,950

SEDGLEY, Viewfield Crescent

NO UPWARD CHAIN, A superbly presented ground floor apartment located in the popular area of Sedgley, Dudley. This One bedroom property comprises of entrance hall, well-appointed living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom, parking and garage available.EPC: D SEDGLEY

New price — WAS £79,950...NOW £74,950

Rental values on new tenancies see 1.1% rise

Rental values on new tenancies agreed in the UK's private rented sector increased by an average of 1.1% in July after two successive months in which rents fell, the latest index shows.

The average rent agreed on a new tenancy signed during July was £925 according to the July HomeLet rental index, compared to £915 in the same month of 2016 after falls of 0.3% and 0.2% in May and June respectively, the first time rents had fallen in the UK since 2009.

But the index report points out that inflation in the private rental sector continues to lag the general rate of inflation, which was 2.7% in June, the latest month for which official data is available.

The report explains that the data suggests landlords now feel more confident than in the spring about seeking higher rents on their properties but also that they remain very aware of tenants' ability to pay.

The July data may also reflect a decrease in the number of homes coming onto the rental market, with research from organisations such as the Association of Residential Letting Agents suggesting fewer landlords have acquired new rental properties in recent months. A similar effect has been seen in the housing market, where weaker prices stabilised in July as fewer properties were put up for sale.

"It has often been the case in recent times that rents have strengthened over the summer period. It's a time when renters contemplate moving, demand increases, tenancy terms are set, and when the anniversary of the tenancy often occurs. This year, that seasonal factor brings some relief for landlords, who've endured a gradual erosion in rent prices over many months," said HomeLet's chief executive officer, Martin Totty.

"At the same stage last year, the south east was the main driver of UK average rents. This time around it's regions throughout the country leading the strengthening in rents. If we exclude the London region, the average UK rent for a private rental property has hit a new high of £769 a month, up 1.6% on this time last year," he pointed out.

"Whether the market has now found some equilibrium remains to be seen, but landlords at least will be grateful for even some short respite. Predicting where the market heads from here is very difficult given the number of competing forces impacting the sector, either already being felt or still being contemplated," he added.

He also pointed out that homes for sale are in short supply.

Market is still growing, but 'more slowly than expected'

Residential property prices in the UK edged up 0.4% in July but in the three months from May to July they were down by 0.2% while annually they are up just 2.1%, according to the latest index.

The figures from lender the Halifax show the average price of a home is now £219,266 and signal that while the property market is still growing, it is doing so much more slowly than perhaps expected.

A closer look at the figures show that the annual rate of growth is now the lowest since April 2013 when it was 2% and well down from the most recent peak of 10% in March 2016.

Nationally, house prices in July 2017 were 10% above their August 2007 peak and the average price of £219,266 is £64,603 or 42% higher than the market's low point of £154,663 in April 2009.

The Halifax's latest house price per square metre report shows that London continues to dominate the country's list of the most expensive property locations on a per square metre basis. The average price per square meter across Britain has increased by 236% over the past 20 years from £672 in 1997 to £2,260 in 2017.

However, this national figure conceals considerable regional differences, with Greater London increasing by 402% in comparison to 147% in Scotland. Hackney has seen the largest increase in average prices per square meter since 1997 with prices rising from £814 to £6,942, or 753%, nearly twice the London average of 402%.

"House prices continue to remain broadly flat, as they have since the start of the year. Prices in the three months to July were marginally lower than in the preceding three months, while the annual rate of growth has edged down from 5.7% in January to 2.1% in July, the lowest rate since April 2013," said Russell Galley, managing director of Halifax Community Bank.

"The rise in the employment level by 175,000 in the three months to May helped push the unemployment rate down to 4.5%, the lowest since June 1975. However, this improvement in the jobs market has not, as yet, boosted wage growth, resulting in earnings rising at a slower rate than consumer prices," he explained.

"This squeeze on spending power, together with the impact on property transactions of the stamp duty changes in 2016 now being realised, along with affordability concerns, appear to have contributed to weaker housing demand," he pointed out.

"However, a continued low mortgage rate environment, combined with an ongoing shortage of properties for sale, should help continue to support house prices over the coming months,' he added.

Jeremy Duncombe, director of the Legal & General Mortgage Club, pointed out that the market is resilient in the face of both political and economic headwinds due to Brexit and the unexpected 2017 general election which resulted in a Hung Parliament but he said that a long term plan to address the UK's chronic lack of suitable housing remains vital.

"Government and industry must come together, and soon, to make a conscious effort to resolve the housing crisis and create enough homes for our growing population, across all tenures, renters and buyers," he added.

Cases of mortgage arrears fall to lowest levels in 23 years

Cases of mortgage arrears have fallen to their lowest levels in at least 23 years, banks and building societies have reported.

The number of mortgages in arrears amounting to 2.5% or more of the outstanding balance declined to 88,200 in the second quarter of 2017, trade body UK Finance reported.

This was the lowest level since at least 1994, when records started.

The total was 5% lower than in the first quarter and amounted to 0.8% of the more than 11 million mortgages outstanding in the UK. But UK Finance cautioned that while home owners are being helped by current low interest rates, mortgage costs are "certain to rise at some stage" – and households should plan ahead. The number of homes being repossessed across the UK also fell in the second quarter to 1,800 – the joint lowest figure since the quarterly data started in 2008. The same number of repossessions was also recorded in the final quarter of 2016.

The second quarter saw falls in the number of mortgages across all arrears bands, including those with the highest levels of arrears, UK Finance said.

Continuing a trend, the rate of buy-to-let arrears was lower than arrears in the owner-occupied sector - although the buy-to-let repossession rate was higher.

This is because lenders extend a high level of forbearance to owner-occupiers to help them overcome any period of financial difficulty and stay in their homes wherever possible, UK Finance said.

UK Finance head of mortgages Paul Smee said: "These figures show that the overwhelming majority of borrowers are managing their mortgage payments successfully, and many of those who have experienced some difficulty in the past are able to recover their financial position.

"The recent improvement in the number of mortgages with high levels of arrears is particularly welcome. Borrowers are being helped by low interest rates, but mortgage costs are certain to rise at some stage. It is important therefore for customers to plan ahead and consider how their finances would be affected in those circumstances.

"As ever, lenders will continue to help borrowers resolve any financial difficulty if possible, so customers should not hesitate to contact their lender if they anticipate any payment problems."

UK Finance is a new trade association, launched in July. It brings together activities previously carried out by several bodies, including the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML).

A rental opportunity for working professionals

DUDLEY
£625 PCM <<<

For full time working professionals only, this delightful rental opportunity in Cascade Way, Dudley, is available from loveyourpostcode.com at £625 per calender month.

This modern property features a neutral finish and a driveway.

The ground floor has a modern-style kitchen with working surfaces and built in appliances of an oven, cooker and washing machine. The main reception room is of a good size and is carpeted. It has access to the garden area via patio double doors. The ground floor is finished with a guest cloakroom/WC. The first floor has two double bedrooms both of which are carpeted. There is also a neatly designed bathroom on this floor. Outside is a respectable sized garden.

Contact loveyourpostcode.com on 0800 862 0870.

Much improved home on sale with no chain

KINGSWINFORD
£155,000

Attractively presented and much improved, this two-bedroomed semi-detached house in Penzer Street, Kingswinford, is for sale through Wakeman at £155,000 with no chain.

It is situated at the head of a cul de sac occupying a wider than normal plot in a popular and established residential area close to the centre of Kingswinford. Presented to a high standard, it has two large double bedrooms.

In full the accommodation includes a storm porch, entrance hall, re-fitted kitchen, living room, conservatory, two double bedrooms, a bathroom, parking, a part integral garage and gardens.

For further information contact Wakeman on 01384 459999.

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13 Wilkinson Road, Moxley
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, August 17, 2017

MG powers into top 25 dealer hot list

By James Parker

MG Motor UK has entered in the top 25 in the Car Dealer Power Survey, the annual round-up of the top performing automotive manufacturers as ranked by their own dealer network.

Outperforming significantly larger and more established brands, such as Jaguar and MINI, MG Motor UK scored particularly well in terms of new car supply, warranties, bonus structure and dealer requirements.

The debut ranking is further affirmation that MG is now one of the UK's fastest-growing car brands.

Highly

With a programme of inspiring new model launches, investment in state-of-the-art vehicle and powertrain technology, and global design capability based in the UK, it's easy to see why dealers rank the brand so highly.

MG's dealer network, which has seen its numbers swell year-on-year, has become synonymous with exceptional customer service, experiencing growth in vehicle registrations over several consecutive years.

The brand is set to roll out its all-new Compact SUV, the MG XS, at the tail end of 2017.

Matthew Cheyne, head of sales and marketing at MG Motor UK, said: "We may be a much smaller team compared to other brands in the market, but we pour a lot of dedication and hard work into what we do in order to consistently punch above our weight.

The popular MG GS SUV

Interiors are well designed

MG's successful supermini the MG3

"It's great to see this effort pay off in terms of dealer and customer satisfaction. We have a no-nonsense approach to retailing which, coupled with low set-up costs, appeals to dealers. I believe we are unrivalled in the opportunities we provide our dealers, both in regard to our franchise offering and in the capacity they have to shape our shared future.

"This is an extremely exciting time for MG, and to see that dealers are enjoying the journey too makes all the hard work worthwhile. We're looking forward to continuing to grow our network but also very much invested in nurturing the relationships we already have to ensure dealers continue to love working with us."

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MG MOTOR UK

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MG3 fuel consumption: URBAN 41.7 mpg | 6.8 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 59.6 mpg | 4.8 l/100km, COMBINED 51.5 mpg | 5.5 l/100km, CO2 Emissions: 124g/km. MG GS fuel consumption: URBAN 36.6 - 37.6 mpg | 7.7 - 7.5 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 53.2 mpg | 5.3 l/100km, COMBINED 45.5 - 46.3 mpg | 6.2 - 6.1 l/100km, CO2 EMISSIONS 139 - 141 g/km.

MG GS Exclusive with metallic paint in Spiced Orange at £20,090 on the road (OTR) or from £234.38 a month based on a 60 month conditional sale agreement and MG3 3Style+ with metallic paint in Ruby Red with White Roof at £12,190.00 or from £162.53 a month based on a 60 month conditional sale agreement. †OTRprice of £8,695 applies to the MG3 3Time with no optional extras and £15,095 applies to the MG GS Explore with no optional extras. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months "Vehicle Excise Duty'. From prices exclude optional metallic paint, accessories and graphics packs. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply:

*0% APR: Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG3 and MG GS models until 30.09.2017. A minimum deposit of 20% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG3 models and 30% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG GS models. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

Summit Garage (Dudley) Limited trading as Summit Garage, is acting as a credit broker and not a lender. We can introduce you to a limited number of finance providers, commission may be received.

BMW 1 Series update inside and out

By James Parker

The BMW 1 Series Sports Hatch received updates to the model range this summer, including a redesigned interior.

Enhancements include a completely redesigned dashboard with Sport and M Sport models, featuring a decorative stitching line that, along with new trims, adds to the premium feel of the cabin.

Latest

Also contributing to an upgrade of the interior are Pearl chrome accents on the window switches, air vents, glove box handle and around the redesigned cup holders, which have a new sliding cover. The new 1 Series also features the latest indicator and wiper stalks, with revised functions and design, in line with the new BMW 5 and 7 Series models.

All new 1 Series models are also now fitted with the latest generation of BMW's ID6 Navigation which features Live Tiles and enhanced graphics.

On models fitted with Professional Navigation (as part of Professional Media package), the larger 8.8-inch display also features BMW Touch functionality and, with the optional Full Black panel display (standard on M140i models and the Professional Media package), the dials now feature a new Black optic display with 3D-effect dials.

Servotronic steering is now fitted as standard. This adjusts the amount of steering assistance to suit the speed the car is travelling at, enhancing driver comfort at low speeds and improving vehicle stability at higher speeds. The range of available colours has been increased, with the addition of Sunset Orange and Seaside Blue metallic paint, while a Cognac Dakota leather is now available as an interior trim.

Now topping the trim levels is the new BMW M Sport Shadow Edition. This features all the specification from the popular M Sport Plus package (M Sport braking system, Harman Kardon loudspeakers, sun protection glass). Additional standard equipment includes cruise control, rear park distance control and extended lighting) along with a wide array of unique additional features. These include black kidney grilles, dark chrome tailpipe, 18-inch M light alloy wheels in Jet Black or Bi-Colour, darkened LED headlights and smoked rear lights.

The BMW M Sport Shadow Edition is priced at just £1,900 more than the cost of M Sport model, prices start from £26,440 on-the-road.

A dark chrome tailgate is one of the features

Darkened LED headlights are a feature

The M Sport Shadow Edition has the M Sport Plus package plus a range of extras

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BMW 116d Sport 5-door Sport Hatch

Monthly Payments	£249.00	Rate of Interest (Fixed)	4.90%
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Annual Mileage	8000	Credit Completion Fee	£0.00
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Dealer Deposit Contribution	£3,093.14	Optional Final Payment	£8,923.48
BMW FS Deposit Contribution	£2,500.00	Total Amount Payable	£23,376.48
Total Deposit	£5,842.14	APR	4.90%
On the road cash Price	£20,771.86	Excess Mileage Charge (Pence Per Mile)	5.18
Amount of Credit	£18,022.86		

For more compelling offers, visit: **www.rybrookwolverhamptonbmw.co.uk/finance**

Fuel economy figures for the 116d Sport 5-door Sports Hatch: Combined 72.4mpg CO2 emissions 103 g/km. Figures may vary depending on driving style and conditions. Figures are obtained in a standardised test cycle. They are intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not be representative of what a user achieves under usual driving conditions.

Rybrook Limited is a credit broker not a lender.

Finance examples are for BMW Select agreements for the models shown above. Applies for new vehicles ordered between 1 July and 30 September 2017 and registered by 31 December 2017 (subject to availability). Retail customers only. *On the road cash price is based on manufacturer's recommended retail price and includes 3 year BMW Retailer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months' road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. **Optional final payment and option to purchase fee not payable if you opt to return the vehicle at the end of the agreement (vehicle condition, excess mileage and other charges may be payable). Finance available subject to credit acceptance to UK residents aged 18 or over. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. Terms and conditions apply. Offer may be varied, withdrawn or extended at any time.'BMW Select' is a form of hire-purchase agreement provided by BMW Financial Services (GB) Limited, Summit ONE, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 0FB. You will have a 14 day statutory right to withdraw from the agreement. We commonly introduce customers to a selected panel of lenders including BMW Financial Services. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to such lenders. This introduction does not amount to independent financial advice.

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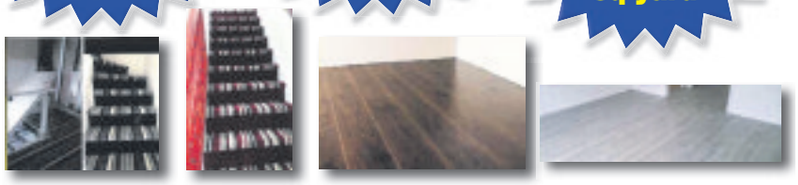

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lost & found

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07752 911611.

LOST—Cream with black fleck Ferrett, from Abingdon Close since August 8.
07981 207777.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

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2 Leisure Time

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3 Home & Services

mind, body & soul

massage

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what's on

book fair

BOOK FAIR Kinver Community Centre, DY7 6ER, Sunday 20th August, Est 1979, Waverley. Next antique Fair 3rd September. Stalls available for all. Home made refreshments. Call 0121 550 4381

collectables & memorabilia

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furniture

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0750 4550167.

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TWO SEATER SOFA, green dralon, £25. Unit, wooden, 3 shelves, 2 cupboards, £20.
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items for sale

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Please telephone Ron

07424 399776.

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loans

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t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

specialists at your service

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or 01902 604187 (eve)

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fencing

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Martin - Centra Heat

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Installed in July T&C apply
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safe register

upholstery

THANK YOU CLASSIFIEDS!

"I am very happy with my Express & Star and Chronicles Advertising Campaign, also by using the local directory on expressandstar.com we are seeing benefits from visitors to our website."

Gary Downes - Bilston Upholstery

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UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pcs/ springs/caravans/pubs/club/antiques. 01902 689844 / 07817 842980.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

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5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

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business directory

accountants

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commercial premises

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6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

APARTMENTS BRAND NEW Large 2 bed. Bargain £495pcm Oldbury / Dudley 01384 230222

A 1 BED FURNISHED FLAT Tettenhall area.CH. No DSS 07976 263435 / 01902 700 028.

ONE BED FLAT CH, DG, £100pw. Netherton area. Deposit required. 07976 781003.

SMART SINGLE ROOMS in Shared house, Netherton. £85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks deposit. 07940 116130.

accommodation wanted

WANTED
2/3 bedroomed house to rent directly from Landlord only, must be willing to accept two Friendly dogs, all areas of Stourbridge considered (accept Lye and Brierley Hill). **Call Tony 01384 896898 07583 520159**

houses for sale

BRIDGNORTH RETIREMENT Apartment for over 60s. One large bedroom, full refurb luxury shower room and kitchen, new decor and carpeted throughout, large lounge with juliet balcony. Riverside situation with nice views, private car parking, easy access to town. Totally secure and managed 24/7.**Offers around £115,000 07971 279249 for details / viewings.**

land

WANTED Plot of land, back gardens considered. Any area. 07774 898966.

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FULLY RESIDENTIAL CHALET/BUNGALOW
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Country location, very private with lounge, kitchen / diner, hall, 3 bedrooms, double glazed, oil fired central heating, garden.
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7 Jobs

motor trade

Dudley based company looking for
ENTHUSIASTIC MECHANIC / VEHICLE BUILDER
City and guilds qualified and dealer time served preferred. Own tools essential and able to work as part of a growing production team.
Auto electrical experience an advantage.
The correct person will be working within a team building both sportscars and latest technology autonomous vehicles.
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part time - general

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full time - general

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Experienced and competent in delivering and advising on HSEQ Qualified to NEBOSH diploma or equivalent Formal auditing qualifications for ISO 9001, ISO 14001 or can demonstrate strong experience in auditing to these standards Environmental qualification desired but not essential Driving licence Competitive package offered

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8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

FIAT PUNTO EVO
2010, 54,000 Miles, blue, electric windows, air bag, alarm, MoT, central locking, pas, reversing senors, Bluetooth, stop start.
£2,400
01384 270259

FORD FIESTA
2011, black, petrol, 3 door, 46,000 miles, MoT due April 2018, full service history since 2014, abs, air con, power steering, CD, stereo, aux.
Good condition!
£4,200 ono.
07929 128044.

FORD PUMA 1.7 COUPE
Three door. 2002.
Silver.
MoT July 29, 2018.
Only 84,000 miles.
SH (11 stamps).
A/C. Heated front screen. E/W. CD. PAS. Drives superb.
Immaculate Condition.
£795.
07939 498854.

HYUNDAI i10 STYLE 1.2 HATCHBACK
5-dr, manual gearbox, petrol, 2011, black, MoT, alloys, sunroof, electric windows, central locking, aircon, 8,995 miles only, heated front seats, lady owner, immaculate condition.
£3,500 ono
01562 911634 / 07871 521216.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

JAGUAR S TYPE V6 SPORT
Diesel Auto
Beige, 2005
12 months MoT,
77,000 miles.
£3,250 ono.
01384 638424.

KIA SPORTAGE XE
2009, 81,000 Miles, Silver, abs, electric windows, air con, FSH, 9 months Mot, metallic paint, central locking, 1 Previous Owner, Excellent Condition.
£3,000 ono
07802 366512

MAZDA MX5 1.8S CONVERTIBLE
MoT April 2018, immaculate, racing bronze, EW, chrome roll bars, 10 services, mohair hood, Pioneer sound.
£1,750
0121 384 7888 / 07771 428793.

PEUGEOT 107
62 reg, 5dr, new MoT, 20,000 miles, free tax.
£2,950 ono.
01902 682321.

SKODA YETI SE TDi 2.0 DIESEL
Reg April 30, 2016.
12,000 miles. FSH.
Still under guarantee.
Add Blue Engine.
Showroom condition.
Sale due to bereavement.
South Sropshire.
£13,450 ono.
01547 530161 / 07765 194970.

TOYOTA AVENSIS
2.0, Diesel, 2006,
5-dr hatchback, grey,
70,600 miles, long MoT,
one owner, service history,
cruise control, parking sensors, etc.
£1,950 ono.
01902 764921.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

TOYOTA AGO
61 reg,
5-dr,
red,
40,000 miles,
alloys,
10 months MoT.
£1,995
07851 213316.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL VECTRA LIFE
5dr, low miles, 2006, MoT, until May 2018, service history, very clean.
£1,999 cash only
07980 435999.

VAUXHALL ADAM 1.2 GLAM
13 plate.
One lady owner.
6,100 miles.
As new condition.
MoT.
£6,250.
01952 812070.

VAUXHALL ADAM SLAM
2013, 35k, green/cream, fsh, climate control, mood lighting, many other features, model has a high specification, immaculate.
£5,400 ono.
07813 052573.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL ASTRA ESTATE
W reg.
Good condition.
Low mileage for year.
£250 ono.
01902 661007.

VAUXHALL ASTRA
2009, 42,600 miles, convertible, grey, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, alarm, long MoT, full Vauxhall s/h.
£2,800.
07940 198062.

cars under £1500

CITEROEN C2 VTR 1.4 HDI
Diesel, 41,000 miles,
£30 Road tax (annually),
60mpg,
very cheap car to run.
£1,500 ono
07738123578.

MUST BE SEEN

FIAT PANDA 1.1 ECO
2010, black,
66,500 miles,
good clean condition,
new tyres,
recent service including timing belt change,
12 months MoT,
one previous owner,
£1,395 ono.
01384 863330
or 07905 432569.

BARGAIN

FIAT PUNTO
04, Facelift model.
Full MoT.
Four door.
Very good condition throughout.
£550.
01384 251328 / 07972 169554.

BARGAIN

FIAT SEICENTO
2000
1100cc, 5 months MoT, new exhaust, very good runner.
£210 for quick sale.
07758 269672.

BARGAIN

FORD KA
Petrol, 53,000 miles, blue. 1.3cc, MoT January 2018, 3 owners, good clean car inside and out.
£750 ono
07838 897643.

FORD MONDEO 2.0 GHIA
2004 plate, 84k,
same owner last 4 years,
Blue,
12 months MoT.
£595.
07913 981460.

BARGAIN

NISSAN MICRA 988CC AUTOMATIC
PAS, CD, 80k, MoT, 3-door, very economical, good runner.
£275
07818 498054.

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ClassifiedAds

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2003, 61,500 miles, metallic blue, alloy wheels, abs, MoT, leather interior, luxury convertible, good condition.
£450 ono.
01562 630445.

MUST BE SEEN

HONDA HRV
2001, 1600
Nice clean car, 84,000 miles, 2 owners, tow bar, MoT December.
£700 ono.
01902 762591 or 07563 055250.

BARGAIN

MINI ONE
02 reg.
Black with purple roof.
Full MoT.
F.S.H.
125,000 miles.
New clutch.
£1,000 ono.
07525 071575.

RENAULT CLIO 1.2
2005, black, 12 months MoT, good condition, 79,500 miles, CL, electric windows, radio CD, alloys, air con, genuine reason for sale,
£650 ono.
07956 968338.

RENAULT LAGUNA 1.9DCi
Diesel, 2004, red, 5-dr, MoT end Oct, radio, CD player, reliable, good runner, first to see will buy.
Bargain £325 ono.
01902 6613691.

BARGAIN

RENAULT SCENIC 1.4
W Reg., silver,
MoT to November,
alloys,
needs slight attention but drives well.
Good condition.
£250 or very near offer.
07498 288103.

SUZUKI ALTO 1.0CC
04 reg,
full MoT,
41k,
£30 year tax,
new tyres.
£575
07791 113080.

SUZUKI SWIFT 1.L GLX
FSH, electric door and mirror, 27K genuine miles, all original glass and screen with heated back screen, full MoT. new brakes, new battery recently full service, every day use, good runner, registration P53MOX.
£600 ono.
07790 978446

BARGAIN

VW GOLF 2002
1.4 Petrol, spares or repair, runner, electric windows, electric mirrors, heated seats, electric sunroof, air bags, black, two door, alloys,
£300.
01902 262179.

VAUXHALL VECTRA
2003, 118,000 Miles, Blue, AC / EW, Good condition, Near full service history
£999 ono
07896 920899

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motorbikes

KAWASAKI 65CC MOTORCROSS MOTORBIKE
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£950 ono may swop for bigger bike.
07495 752322.

LOOK

PEUGEOT 50CC REV AND GO SCOOTER
07 reg, no MoT, red.
Very good condition.
With as new battery.
£175 ono.
Telephone 07514 081104.

WANTED
Raleigh Moped.
01384 235945.

scrap vehicles

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Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

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07972 169554
anytime

spares/parts

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10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE MALE 38
If you are looking for a genuine, honest, caring male who is fun to be around, then look no further!
I enjoy cycling, bowling, cinema, pubs, meals out, walks, holidays etc and would like to meet a like minded mature lady aged 30 to 44 years.
All areas considered.
Genuine replies only.
Photo appreciated (returned).
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We have players but need Manager for new season.
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Keith: 07896 666589.

WITHYMOOR COLTS
Charter Standard Community Status Club.
All Managers minimum FA Level 1 and CRC Checked.
Under 13's, West (2017/18 Season).
Require
OUTFIELD PLAYERS
to join existing Squad.
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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
8 JUNE 2017

DUDLEY NORTH, DUDLEY SOUTH, HALESOWEN & ROWLEY REGIS AND STOURBRIDGE CONSTITUENCIES

I, the undersigned, Acting Returning Officer for the above constituencies HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that I have received the returns and declarations as to election expenses of the undermentioned Candidates and Election Agents:

DUDLEY NORTH

Candidate	Election Agent
Ian Christopher Austin	Gordon Gibbs
William Milroy Etheridge	Dean Perks
Ben France	Ryan Priest
Les Jones	Karen Shakespeare-Jones
Andrew Nixon	Andrew Nixon

DUDLEY SOUTH

Candidate	Election Agent
Mitch Bolton	Kerry Lewis
Jon Bramall	David Shepherd
Jenny Maxwell	Jenny Maxwell
Natasha Millward	Stephen Raynor
Mike Wood	Peter Philip Miller

HALESOWEN & ROWLEY REGIS

Candidate	Election Agent
Ian Gordon Cooper	John Tipper
Stuart Henley	Philip Arthur Wimlett
James George Morris	Gary William Sambrook
James Alan Robertson	James Alan Robertson
Jamie Christian Scott	Derek Campbell
Tim Weller	Tim Weller

STOURBRIDGE

Candidate	Election Agent
Christopher Ashley Bramall	Simon Paul Hanson
Margot James	Angus Stuart Macpherson Lees
Pete Lowe	Joe Payne
Andi Mohr	Andi Mohr
Glen Patrick Wilson	Glen Patrick Wilson

Returns, declarations and accompanying documents, can be inspected at Electoral Services, Old Crown Court, Priory St Dudley DY1 1EY during office hours for two years.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Sarah Norman
Acting Returning Officer
25 July 2017

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Text.. **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

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Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

ATTRACTIVE lady, young at heart, would like to meet genuine caring guy for coffee and chats, plus days out. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6035338**

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure with average looks. I want a similar man, GSOH looks unimportant. Age is but a number. I have no car but can accommodate. **Text Only. Box: 4145368**

SALLY young 50, happy go lucky blonde, looking to let her hair down with a happy, down to earth guy with dark hair. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428269**

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette with boyish leggy figure. N/S with GSOH. I've a good job and small flat which I own. **Text Only. Box: 4099268**

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young. Looking for friendship, maybe more with genuine gent. I'm feminine and curvy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428157**

MANDY, 64yrs but still fit and sexy. Hoping to meet younger local lad for good daytime fun. Chats and texts any time. **Text Only. Box: 4050784**

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady, blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent and kind. Call me if you are interested in meeting up. Looks unimportant. Must be N/S. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428155**

PAULINE, 59yrs, nurse who loves her uniform! I'm married but work odd hours so can meet easily. ACA. **Text Only. Box: 4110283**

I am a 57-year-old lady, 5ft 8ins tall, short brownish hair. I am of medium build, outgoing, caring and WLTM similar male. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6024848**

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and has time on her hands. Would love to meet a much much younger chap for carefree times. **Text Only. Box: 4006039**

ATTRACTIVE widow, attractive, blonde, GSOH, solvent with good figure. All that's missing is a nice man 60+. Call me if you are interested. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428139**

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very petite, kind and respectful Asian girl, hoping to meet an older white man. I'm 23yrs old and have just moved her. **Text Only. Box: 4177099**

MAY, 64, widow, GSOH, lonely and WLTM a nice, kind gentleman of similar age, hopefully someone who likes walking and animals. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428217**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, feminine, kind, loves life. Call me or text me your number and let's meet up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428143**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

SHEILA, 64, widow, GSOH, likes to get out and about, walking, animals, reading, classical music, WLTM a male of similar age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428181**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

CHRISSIE 42, pretty, leggy and feminine searching for romance seeks tall, dark, hunky guy to set her heart on fire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428237**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

GENUINE caring lady 65yrs, varied interests, solvent, loves life, feminine, WLTM gent of any age for life's pleasures. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428151**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

DEBBIE 44, lonely and fed up brunette, slightly bonkers and in need of love and attention, seeks Mr Special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428199**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

PEGGY young 58, married but lonely, WLTM a nice man similar age for days, evenings out and friendship. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025217**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

FEMALE 66, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out/in, looking for male, 68-75, for friendship maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4416972**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851**

JAN 40s, small outgoing affectionate blonde, likes cuddles, seeks romantic male to share special times and bring sunshine into her life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428089**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533**

MARY 46, shy curvy brunette looking for someone to be a good fun friend, to laugh with and love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428073**

CAROL, attractive lady 55yrs young, slim, tanned, brunette. If you are genuine and looking to date then call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428153**

RACHAEL, 50yrs, blue-eyed attractive lady, loves films, music and home life. WLTM gent 50-70yrs. ACA or text. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428149**

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+ **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428147**

IF you are interested in meeting an attractive black lady then please call me. I'm Nikki, 57yrs, attractive, interested and kind. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428145**

CAROL, 60 something lady with a wicked sense of humour, please call or text for more info. I promise to reply to all callers. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428141**

LADY, 63, WLTM a gentleman of similar age, for friendship and outings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428029**

ATTRACTIVE, slim brunette, 54, widow, kind, caring, romantic, enjoys the arts, sightseeing, dining out, seeks professional gent with GSOH and family values, with mutual interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428013**

GEORGINA, 50s, attractive, happy blonde, loves sport, theatre, seeks intelligent, lively male to share the fun side of life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428053**

SUE 53, voluptuous, outgoing, cuddly and bubbly, loves a joke and just wants fun, flirting and laughter in her life again, seeks her Mr Charming. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427913**

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427897**

EMMA 56, active and always on the go, seeks fit, active, country loving guy who shares passion for the outdoors. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427811**

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ATTRACTIVE lady, 57yrs, great sense of humour, now looking for good times and good memories. Hoping to meet gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427883**

STUNNINGLY attractive black lady, 50s, with blissful imagination, you have to call to hear what's on offer, you won't be sorry!! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427877**

Single Men

VERY fit, elderly widower, loves walking, bird watching, exploring Europe, WLTM a lady for companionship. Please reply via box number. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428171**

MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168**

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, N/S, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, genuine lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

PHIL 55, divorced, 5ft 10ins, slim, OHAC, seeks female, 18 plus for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401875**

HI my name is Jay. I'm looking for a lady to have a lovely evening with, maybe once or twice a week. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427927**

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038**

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 56, 6ft, WLTM an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109**

MALE, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

FUN loving Irish man, seeks relationship, for fun times and going out. Please get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428077**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

I am Kev, 57, looking for a lady in my life. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6023170**

SHAUN, 50, honest, reliable, OHOC, employed, animal lover, likes walks in the country, meals out in country pubs, walking my dogs, looking for my soul mate. If you would like to know more get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427497**

GENTLEMAN, kind, considerate, tactile, thoughtful and caring, hobbies include growing fuschias and vintage tractors, looking for a country girl, someone with no plans of grandeur. Truth and trust number 1 as I trust you so you tell me the truth, and vice versa. Looking for someone to hold and love forever. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427791**

SINGLE male, 43, looking for female friends for txt, phone chats, maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6017886**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE 40s, 5ft 8ins, brown hair, seeks lovely honest girl for fun and friendship please. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6018513**

MALE, 50, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, 16 and a half stone, good sense of humour, animal lover with loads of love and security to give to the right person. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418783**

MALE 5ft 8ins, average looks, seeking genuine, honest, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413945**

HI my name is Ben. I am 43 years old, 5ft7, slim build, smart dresser, looking for a bored similar lady for naughty texting. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6007244**

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Wolverhampton. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405551**

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Wolves old boy in £18m Hornets move

FORMER Wolves player Andre Gray has become the most expensive Black Country footballer in history in an £18 million deal from Burnley to Premiership rivals Watford.

Wednesfield-born Gray, 26, scored nine times in the Premier League last year. Formerly on the youth books at Wolves, he was released by the club at the age of 13.

Gray becomes the most expensive footballer from the area, more than double the £8.5 million paid for Stan Collymore by Liverpool.

The striker was knifed in a gang fight over Christmas in 2011. In 20012 Gray was suspended for four matches and fined £25,000 over homophobic Tweets he had posted.

Gray, who progressed through Shrewsbury's youth system, joined Luton in 2012 and made more than 100 appearances before moving on for an undisclosed fee in 2014 to Brentford, for whom he scored 20 goals in 52 games. He had a loan spell at Telford in 2009-10.

Golfers tee up chance to play at The Belfry

GOLFERS from The Chase and Penn clubs have teed up a round at the Ryder Cup course The Belfry for the national final of the American Golf 9 Hole Individual Championship.

Home golfer Paul Elsey held off Laurence Horan by a point in the regional qualifying held at Penn Golf Club.

They now join qualifiers from all over the UK and Ireland in front of Sky Sports' cameras for the grand final on September 7 and 8. They are both also in contention for the Tournament of Champions in Mauritius.

"Our 9 Hole Championship is hugely popular," said Daniel Gathercole, director of marketing and communication at American Golf. "It gives golfers the chance to play championship golf after work and still be home at a reasonable time.

"Golf has struggled to find a place in people's busy lives over recent years so we're delighted that events such as the 9 Hole Championship have proved so popular."

Hawks take flight for national T20 final

C&R Hawks are gearing up for the biggest game in their short history after reaching the finals day of the ECB National T20 tournament.

The Birmingham League Division Two outfit beat Essex League side Wanstead and Snaresbrook at Walsall CC's Gorway ground to reach the showpiece final at Derbys 3aaa ground, home to Derbyshire County Cricket Club. Highlights of the September 11 clash will be broadcast on Sky Sports.

Skipper Mubeen Rashid said: "This is already the furthest any Birmingham League club has ever got in the competition and that is something we are very proud of."

Hawks only formed in 2014 by the merger of Hawkins Sports and Cannock and Rugeley. But they have some serious talent in their ranks, including Omar Ali, the younger brother of England star Moeen. Kabir Ali, Moeen's cousin, played 14 one-day internationals himself between 2003 and 2006 and though now aged 36 has proved a threat with both bat and ball as Hawks battled their way into the later stages of the tournament.

Barry first played for Villa in 1998 and made 441 appearances

Gareth Barry gets involved with Chelsea's Diego Costa

Every game counts as Barry closes on record

MAY 2, 1998 – an otherwise insignificant date but for the fact that this was the day a certain Gareth Barry made his Premier League debut.

Few could have ever envisaged that, almost two decades later, that fresh-faced youngster who had arrived from the south coast would be on his way to setting the all-time Premier League appearance record.

Barry's move to Villa Park from Brighton, when he was just 16, was controversial enough.

He arrived with Michael Standing – a fellow midfielder who played zero first-team minutes in four years before leaving for Bradford.

Barry's debut against Sheffield Wednesday, however, was glimpse of things to come.

On that day he featured alongside current England boss Gareth Southgate and the late Ugo Ehiogu in a defensive trio under then boss John Gregory.

There were little doubts over his level of talentand a decade later, in 2008, he was a proud captain at Villa Park.

Chalked

An adopted Brummie, Barry was the key cog in Martin O'Neill's eye-catching outfit which pushed the 'established' top four so hard in the mid-noughties.

Barry had chalked up 441 appearances in claret and blue before he moved north to Manchester City, claiming a "new challenge" was required. Within a few years he was an FA Cup winner and Premier League champion.

But the most prized of all could be yet to come.

For that Villa status is one thing, and winners medals are another, but Barry, now 36, is not far from etching himself into English top flight history.

Now with Everton (but coveted by Tony Pulis at Albion), Barry has another year on his deal at Goodison Park and is set for a huge individual milestone.

Ryan Giggs' Premier League appearance record stands at 632, Barry is just four behind on 628.

"I do like stats. I'd be lying if I was saying I don't look out for them," said the former Villa skipper.

"That record's been spoken about more the closer

SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Cox

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how what I've achieved."

I get now. Obviously it's not the same now being 36 as when you are 26 but in terms of being able to do a job I'm still feeling really strong and still enjoying it.

"Enjoying it is more important than anything and at the minute I've got a great manager that understands my age and what I can and can't do.

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how many I've done and what I've achieved.

"If I do break it then my name's on top of the pile and my parents will probably be extra proud. We'll see what happens."

Barry, who is now based in Cheshire, has recently been made a patron of Shropshire's Ellesmere College's football academy, where his son Oscar attends.

And there remains a sparkle in his eye when discussing Villa. He points to the length of time spent at Villa Park and at Bodymoor Heath, where he developed from a boy into a man – from spindly academy hopeful to worshipped first-team skipper.

"I look out for Villa's results all of the time," he added. "The majority of my friends are from Birmingham, supporting either Villa or Blues. There are so many memories at Villa for me.

"Because I've been gone so long people forget how many games I did actually play – it's a time I'll never forget, they brought me into Premier League life.

"My game improved when I left school and went to Villa. The coaches, youth team, reserve team and to the first team, they were fantastic with me.

"Any supporter will tell you that they like young players coming through. If a player attached to an academy can eventually go through to being captain and wear that armband, it's fantastic for them. I was lucky enough to do it at Villa and really enjoyed it. They taught me how to become a professional footballer and what's needed. It's a time I'll never forget."

The Villa Barry left in 2009 are a long way from the club's current plight. Steve Bruce knows the importance of his first full season at the helm. Barry believes his former side are in the right hands.

"It's good to see Steve Bruce there, he had a little sticky patch but he's a fantastic manager.

"I think Villa are finding their feet again. It's been a few tough years with the relegation, which was always going to be hard, but they just needed that bit of time to settle and Steve Bruce is the right man to do that. He'll get a squad that'll eventually start to find their feet and begin to push for promotion."

Faithful

A quick search of Barry's name on internet forums or social media will instantly display a plethora of nostalgic Villa Park faithful yearning for a Barry return.

Earlier this year he attended the Stiliyan Petrov Foundation dinner, where a photo was snapped for a smartly-dressed Barry posing with Villa's current midfield prodigy Jack Grealish. The Solihull-born 21-year-old has a long, long way to go eclipsing the sort of reputation Villa's former No.6 built.

He'll be 37 by next summer, at the end of his Everton contract and with – presumably – the Premier League record safely under his belt.

A Villa return couldn't happen...could it?

"You never say never but as always Everton is the sole focus for me at the moment."

And what will come after the boots are hung up? "I'm not ruling anything out, I'm not going to do the badges while I'm still playing. I've made that decision.

"I want to finish playing and look back and see if I do miss being around it and whether I want to go into coaching. I'm not one to plan too much so I'll go from there. I've got one more left which will take me till I'm 37 which, for a footballer, is veteran stages – so I realise where I am in my career. I'm enjoying it still and that's the most important thing."

Sport

Ex-Villa ace Barry closing in on appearance record

Page 43

Glassboys fight back for a point

EVO-STIK Premier title favourites Stourbridge salvaged a point in front of a bumper Sunday afternoon Amblecote crowd of 1,050.

But the spectators had hardly settled when Matlock shocked Stourbridge by snatching a fifth-minute lead.

Matlock had booted the ball straight down the middle of the park where striker Marc Newsham diverted the ball past advancing Glassboys goalkeeper Matt Gould and watched it roll into an empty net despite desperate efforts to clear by central defender Paul McCone.

Stourbridge striker Jordan Archer steered the ball wide on 23 minutes and then fired narrowly over as half-time approached.

Central defender Stuart Pierpoint had a fierce shot charged down from a Connor Gater corner before Glassboys finally levelled deep into first-half stoppage time when Gater chipped the ball to the far post for Leon Broadhurst to head down and Archer swept home.

Stourbridge carved out a string of chances in the second half but couldn't convert. Broadhurst wasted a glorious opportunity on 58 minutes when he fired straight at Matlock 'keeper Phil Barnes while lively substitute Brandon Hague twice went close.

Matlock should have wrapped up the points with three minutes remaining when Darnelle Bailey-King's shot was spectacularly kept out by Gould. There was time for Stour to set up a possible late winner when McCone's header was cleared off the line by Jake Green.

Downhill racer Tromans goes for gold in Clent event

WHILE Great Britain's elite athletes were competing in London at the World Championships, Dudley Kingswinford's elite travelled the short distance to Clent for the culmination of the Worcestershire Midweek Series.

With very little on the calendar again this week only Helen Tromans pulled on the vest to compete but came away with plenty of prizes as the series came to a close.

Having placed well in previous races of the four race series she was in with a good chance of finishing top of the table and only needed a good result at the Clent 8k, a two lap race which included some biting inclines and some perilous descents.

Although the climbs made the legs burn the downhills played to her strengths as she finished in 47th place in a time of 42.27. A performance good enough to claim fifth female and first in her age group on the night saw her also bag the overall series age group prize. As an added bonus Tromans was also presented with a Worcestershire County gold medal for one race in the series.

Family become rivals in derby clash

CRADLEY new boy Richard Hall is preparing for a family affair in Heathens' crunch clash with local rivals Birmingham at Monmore Green on Monday.

Hall will face off with his stepson Jack Parkinson-Blackburn, the teenage hotshot who is leading the Brummies' quest for a third straight National League title.

The derby date is a huge occasion for both clubs as they fight to reach the all-important top four to earn a play-off place. But Hall insists his new side has what it takes to secure bragging rights and claim a vital three points.

"It will be quite a rivalry," said Hall. "We went up against each other with Sheffield and Peterborough earlier this year, we clashed and he put out his shoulder.

"It is always nice to go up against Jack, he is an up-and-coming rider who is on a mission for Birmingham at the minute and riding really well. Come what may, there will be no hard feelings.

"We know what Birmingham can do around Monmore Green but our top three is capable of matching theirs."

Hall got his Heathens career off to a dream start with a maximum in last week's crushing win over the Isle of Wight at Perry Barr.

"Hopefully, there will be plenty more maximums to come," he declared. "It was a good return because I have struggled a lot with confidence all season. I would have been happy to go home with 10 points but this maximum has given me a boost."

DK CRUSHED THE VESEYANS

Veseyans 7 DK 80

PERHAPS the whole game was encapsulated by the opening minutes when Veseyans resorted to a kick to relieve the early pressure.

It was a long kick into the DK 22, not meant for touch, aiming to force a kick to touch from DK.

The Veseyans' Walsall pitch slopes from touchline to touchline and Nic Adams collected the ball in the 22. The kick chase offered the opportunity to counter attack and Adams was able to get to the left edge of the kick chase where he found Stef Shillingford and TJ Gordon. DK now had an attacking line, the three inter-passed before hooker Matt Squire arrived at pace and scampered in from the 22 for the first try. Sam Vaughan added the extras, so it was 7-0 DK in the first five minutes.

DK added to their lead via Sam Vaughan, who also added the conversion, and Adams ran in the third try as Vaughan made it 21-0.

The DK forward pack were producing good quick ball, and the backs were once again attacking down the left hand touchline and the defence was beaten by a miss pass that led to TJ Gordon going down in the corner untouched, the conversion was missed for 26-0.

Changes

Gordon and Vaughan made it 38-7 by half time after Veseyans scored their only converted try.

At half time, DK made six changes so everyone was used meant that everyone had been used.

Matt Squire's try was converted by Duncan Tompkins, taking over kicking duties. Ricky Bennett showed his dancing feet beating several defender to score his try. Tompkins added the extras, 57-7. Jordan Brookes was next over the line, Tompkins converting, as he did after Mitch Grealey burst through. Then it was the Al Francis show, with Tompkins adding conversions, before Nic Adams, scored the final try, a converted from the touchline by Tompkins.

Podium joy for endurance riders

Proudly displaying their second in class trophies are, from left, Siviter, Scott and Wright

ENDURANCE riders who entered the UK's first 1,000km race had already assured their place in the history books.

But the Black Country's Double Two Racing had the added bonus of leaving the six-hour marathon battle with another podium.

Pete Wright, from Tividale, and Martyn Siviter, from Blackheath, were joined by guest rider and 'star of the future', Scott Stevens.

After a terrible start, which included a 100mph crash for Siviter, the team battled to second in 600cc class and 16th overall following hours of intense racing at Donington Park.

Coming into Melbourne Loop, Wright pushed too hard into the final corner, went slightly wide, hit the bump in the track and went down.With minimal damage to the bike, uninjured Wright passed the transponder to Stevens in time for his qualifying and the newcomer achieved the quickest time to put Double Two Racing fourth on the grid out of 50 teams.

After three hours they were 27th (fifth in class), 21st (third in class) after four, and and finally 16th (second in class) after six hours and 1,000km of racing.

It's a rude awakening for Yeltz

Workington 3 Halesowen 1

HALESOWEN were two down within six minutes but showed fighting spirit to stay in the game on the opening day of the Evo-Stik Premier season, though it was ultimately in vain.

The Yeltz were shocked on two minutes when a corner was headed into the danger area and Jack Ryan nodded home at close range. Workington doubled their lead when Ryan turned one of the providers as Scott Allison shot into the far corner of the net

Halesowen tried to hit back as James Spray put a shot into the side netting and then Luke Shearer hit the foot of the post.

It was all over for the Yeltz on 20 minutes when Sam Smith shot home for Workington from 12 yards after a free-kick wasn't cleared.

The second half saw Halesowen have plenty of possession although few chances. Shearer went down in the area but the visitors' claims for a penalty were turned down.

They did get a consolation shortly after when Danny Bragoli went up for a challenge in the box with goalkeeper Aaran Taylor and the ball ended up in the net.

Stratford leave Stourbridge in a spin

STOURBRIDGE inadvertently played into the hands of visitors Stratford offering a spinning surface that ended in an huge eight wicket defeat for the home side.

The pitch offered very little to Stour's main weapon, paceman Jade Richter. Stour was skittled out for 131 in the 46th over. Youngster Jujhar Johal was the only one to show any resistance scoring 79 off 112 balls batting at three

Spinner Perry Derryck celebrated by topping the bowling with six wickets for 43 off 14 overs.

Boosted by a low target, Stratford openers John Price (41) and Adam Bayliss (59 not out) produced a winning platform.

Two nicks through the slip to boundary was the only reward for the luckless Richter. Spinner Dominic O'Reilly got Price lbw and Rob West caught behind for 20. David Bailey completed the easy win with Bayliss in the 26th over.

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Deferred Interest Free Credit available on all orders over £500. Subject to status. All balances must be paid in January 2018 on the date specified at the time of purchase. Written details on request. Offer not available on clearance items, in store concessions or web specials. Some items are subject to one per household and only available in limited colours, or the colours shown in this advert. Prices in this advert are valid until 03.09.17. See website for Price Promise details.